A GUIDE









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BULGARIA A GUIDE

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THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA



Bulgaria is situated in the north-east part of the Balkan Peninsula between 41° and 44° latitude North and 22° and 28° longitude. To the north lies Romania and the River Danube (471.5 km.), to the west, Yugoslavia (506 km.), to the south Greece (493 km.) and Turkey (259 km.), and to the east, the Black Sea (378 km.). The country covers 110,911.5 sq. km of extremely diverse terrain: lowlands make up 31.4% of the area, hills 41.% and mountains 27.6%. This influences the climate to the extent that, although small, Bulgaria has several climatic zones: a continental zone, a typically Mediterranean and Black Sea coastal zone, and a zone of mountain ranges.

NATURE

The predominant brown colour on the map gives the impression of a truly mountainous country, but this is in fact not the case. The mountains are not very high, and for the most part are easily accessible. Individual mountain chains and massifs alternate from north to south with picturesque plains and valleys. The Danubian plain lies in the northernmost part between the Danube and the Balkan Range. It is a hilly plain, cut through by river valleys. Its highest point is the Shoumen Plateau. To the north, the plain overhangs the Danube with steep slopes which can rise to as much as 150 metres. Dykes protect the vast fertile lowlands from the Danube's high crater.

The Balkan Range has a well defined mountain relief. The mountains divide Bulgaria into two, north and south, forming a climatic boundary some 530 km long. The highest peak is Botev (2,376 metres). The mountain ridge is easy to cross and there are many motorways linking north and south. There are

a number of interesting rock formations.

The Rila-Rhodope Mountains massif borders in the north on the Upper Thracian Lowland and in the south on the Aegean Sea plain. The most notable high points are Mount Rhodopes, Rila, Pirin and the Ossogovo-Belassitsa Range, Mount Moussala (2,925 metres) to the south-west in the Rila Mountains and Peak Vihren (2,915 metres), forming part of the neighbouring Mount Pirin. The Rhodope Mountain spreads out eastward, its highest peak being Golyam Perelik (2,192 metres). Sredna Gora Mountain runs parallel to the Balkan Range between the sub-Balkan valleys in the north and the vast Upper Thracian Lowland in the south. Towering over Sofia is Mount Vitosha, while Mount Strandja lies in the southeast and the Belassitsa and Ossogovo Mountains in the southwest.

The largest plains are the Danubian and the Dobroudja — Bulgaria's granary in the northeast. The Thracian Lowland (named

after its ancient inhabitants) is situated south of the Sredna Gora Mountain, now famous for wine, fruit and tobacco. Rose

Valley situated in the southwest are less extensive.

Rivers The Danube is Europe's second largest river after Volga in the USSR. It is 2,857 km long and is formed by two mountain rivers which have their source in the eastern slopes of the Schwarzwald in the Federal Republic of Germany, later merging with another tributory near the town of Donaueschingen in Western Germany. The Danube flows into the Black Sea, forming a huge delta and is navigable from Ulm in Western Germany to its mouth — a total of 2,640 km. During a particularly severe winter the river has been known to freeze for up to 45 days. Its depth varies from 10-15 metres at its narrowest to around 4 metres. The river serves as Bulgaria's border, with its connection to the River Timok near the town of Silistra in the east, and is a convenient waterway linking Bulgaria with Western Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania and the USSR. Bulgaria's inland rivers are mainly shallow, the largest being the Maritsa which springs from the Rila Mountains, crosses the Thracian Lowland and flows into the Aegean Sea.

The marshland around the Danube has now been drained with

only Lake Sreburna being left as a reserve.

Bulgaria has three kinds of lakes: coastal, Karst and Alpine, with the latter found mainly in the Rila and Pirin Mountains. Large dams have been built since Bulgaria became a republic serving both as a source of power and for irrigation and water

supply.

The Black Sea, once known as Pontos Euxinos and part of the Mediterranean, divides Europe and Asia. The Bosphorus links it with the Sea of Marmara, and the Kerch straits with the Azov Sea. It covers an area of 413,488 sq.km. and reaches a depth of 2,245 metres. The bays of Varna and Bourgas with their well appointed ports act as Bulgaria's link with other maritime nations. At the end of 1983, Bulgaria's population was 8,949,300, 65% living in urban conditions, out of which 1,200,000 live in Sofia alone.

HISTORY

Many artefacts bear witness to present-day Bulgaria having been inhabited since the Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages. The oldest known inhabitants were the Thracians, who were a particularly sophisticated people. At the end of the 5th century BC they founded their own state — the Odrisaw Kingdom, extending over the Balkan Peninsula east of the rivers Isker and Strouma. Roman influence in the Balkan Peninsula spread after 2nd century B.C. After long battles with the Thracian tribes, the Romans succeeded in conquering the Peninsula.



The Malyovitsa peak in Rila Mountain

The First Bulgarian State was founded in the 7th century by agreement among the proto-Bulgarians of Khan Asparouh, originating from around the Azov Sea, and the Slav tribes. The state controlled the land between the Balkan Range and the Carpathians and lasted from 618-1018. Under Khan Kroum (803-814) the country consolidated and expanded. His successor Omourtag (814-831) concluded a 30-year peace treaty with Byzantium and devoted himself to construction. In 864, under Prince Boris I, Bulgarians and Slavs became Christian an act of tremendous significance in the further development of the Bulgarian State. Brothers Cyril and Methodius created the Cyrillic alphabet, which encouraged the Slavonic script. Under Tsar Simeon (893-927) son of Boris I, Bulgarian culture enjoyed its Golden Age, Schools were set up in the capital -Veliki Preslav and in Ohrid. Valuable manuscripts from those times are still in existence. The framework of religious literature proved too narrow for the Bulgarians and was broken. The Bogomil social and religious movement made its appearance and later spread to Italy, Southern France (Catherists and Albigenses), as well as to Byzantium, Serbia, Bosnia, Russia and elsewhere.

Late in the 10th century Bulgaria grew weak and after half a century of struggle fell under Byzantine rule in 1018. After a series of unsuccessful uprisings and rebellions, two brothers Assen and Peter roused the people to revolt in 1185, and in 1187, liberated part of the Bulgarian lands. The Second Bulgarian State was founded. Under Tsar Kaloyan (1197-1207) and Tsar Ivan Assen II (1218-1241) Bulgaria was the strongest state in Southeast Europe. A period of internecine struggle followed and many kings reigned in rapid succession. The central power weakened in the second half of the 13th century and the Tatars invaded and plundered the country. The peasants' plight was difficult and their discontent led to an uprising (1277-1280) — the first successfulanti-feudal uprising in Europe. The rebels crowned their shepherd leader, Ivailo, a king.

Separatist tendencies gained momentum in late 14th century and the country was divided into three — The Turnovo,

Vidin and Dobroudja kingdoms.

In 1352 Ottoman Turks invaded the peninsula and, taking advantage of the fragmented state of the Balkans, overthrew the states one after another. Turnovgrad fell in 1383, followed by the Vidin kingdom in 1396 after which the Turkish domination lasted for five centuries.

The 18th century was a period of Bulgarian National Revival, characterized by a struggle for national and religious independence and gave rise to great cultural upsurge. Paissi, a monk in Hilendar Monastery on Mount Athos is regarded as the father of the National Revival. In 1762 he wrote his Slav-Bulgarian History, which played an important role in awakening the people's national awareness. The Ottoman Empire suffered great defeats in a number of successive Russo-Turkish wars (1768-1774, 1787-1791, 1806-1812). Bulgarian volunteers took part in these wars as well as in the Russo-Turkish Wars of 1828-1829.

In 1870, the struggle for church independence from the Greek Patriarchate in Constantinople was successful. The leaders in this struggle were Neophyte Bozveli, Ilarion Makariopol-

ski and Petko Slaveikov.

After the Crimean War (1853-1856) the Bulgarian national liberation movement gained force on a new foundation. Vassil Levski went round the country setting up revolutionary committees to prepare for the uprising. In 1873 he was captured and hanged by the Ottoman authorities but preparations continued, and in 1876, the April Uprising broke out. Its cruel suppression aroused the indignation of the whole of Europe and an international conference was convened in Constantinople (1876-1877). The findings of the conference were inconclusive and in April 1877, Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire. Bulgarian volunteers took part side by side with Russian troops. The San Stefano Peace Treaty was signed on 3rd March 1878.



Rose-picking in the Valley of Roses

By this treaty a Bulgarian state was established on the lands of the Balkan peninsula inhabited by a predominantly Bulgarian population. Under the Treaty of Berlin, however, the country was torn into three: the area from the Timok to the Black Sea and around Sofia formed the Principality of Bulgaria; Southern Bulgaria became Eastern Roumelia under the direct military and political rule of the Sultan and the rest remained under Turkish rule. The Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia were united in 1885 after a revolutionary uprising.

The development of ties with capitalist countries and the growth of the working class gave rise to socialist political consciousness. In 1891, the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party was founded which later became the Bulgarian Communist Party.

The Bulgarian Agrarian Union was set up in 1899.

During 1912-1918 Bulgaria took part in the Balkan Wars and in World War I. Following parliamentary elections, an Agrarian government led by Alexander Stamboliiski came to power. It did not last very long. A military fascist coup d'etat was carried out on 9th June 1923 and in September 1923 the world's first anti-fascist uprising broke out and was led by the Communist Party of Bulgaria. It was brutally suppressed. The period between 1924-1941 was marked by acute class and po-



The mouth of Kamchiya River

litical struggles. In 1941, the establishment consented to the Nazi forces entry into Bulgaria. Following Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, the Bulgarian Popular Front formed a resistance movement. Victory was achieved on 9th September 1944 with the assistance of the Soviet Army. In 1946, a referendum proclaimed Bulgaria a People's Republic and a period of accelerated economic and cultural development ensued. The People's Republic of Bulgaria is a socialist state governed by representatives of the working people, headed by the working class. The National Assembly is the supreme body of state power and the sole legislative body. It has 400 national representatives, elected for a term of five years.

Economy — Great changes have occurred over the last four decades: from a backward agricultural country with poorly developed industry, Bulgaria has become a modern industrial and agricultural state. Before World War II the ratio between industry and agriculture was 25:75, whilst in 1975 it had grown to 83:17. New industries have been developed which were non-existent in old Bulgaria: machine-building, metallurgy, chemical industry and power generation. The country's national income has shown a 13-fold increase in the last 40 years, with industry accounting for some 57%, closely

followed by agriculture, construction and trade.



"Khan Asparouh concluding an alliance with the Slavs", by Ivan Petrov

Industry A prominent feature of the country's economic development is its industrialization. Production in machine-building, chemical, metallurgical industries and power generation have grown at enormous rates. Bulgarian electric trucks, hoists, electronic calculators and automatic equipment have world-wide recognition. Vessels built by Bulgarian shipyards are sold to countries which themselves have also developed dynamically together with the chemical industry, petrochemical industry, plastics, artificial fertilizers and the pharmaceutical industry. Power generation is key to the country's development; in 1939 the production was 266 million kwh whilst in 1983 it reached 4,300 million kwh. Numerous thermal and hydroelectric power stations have been built over the years and are now complemented by a nuclear power station in the whole of the Balkan peninsula.

Light industry has also developed at a great pace since the end of the war and the production of consumer goods has increased more than 40 times. Largest production is in textiles, tailoring, fur, glass and porcelain. Bulgaria is well known as an agricultural producer and a considerable percentage of the produce is processed. Tinned fruit, wine, vegetables, meat and fish make up a large part of the country's exports. There is also an expanding sugar industry and milk processing, tobacco and ci-



"Father Paissi of Hilendar", by Ivan Mrkvichka

garette production. Agriculture has expanded and cooperative and state farms have almost trebled their capital investment, increased labour productivity and raised farmers' living standards. Plans are in hand to amalgamate the farms with food

processing plants.

Transport Rail transport has expanded considerably, especially with the change over to diesel and electric locomotives. In addition, road transport has also undergone great expansion since the foundation of the Republic. From a mere 19,500 km in 1939, Bulgaria's road network reached 36,113 km in 1982. The Bulgarian Civil Air Transport carries over two million passengers annually. Bulgaria has air connection with almost all European capitals as well as the Middle East. The total tonnage of the Bulgarian merchant fleet exceeds 1 million and Bulgarian fishing vessels ply the Black Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Health and Social Security in Bulgaria is the concern of the State. No contributions are deducted from wages and salaries. Men retire with a state pension at 60 and women at 55, or after 25 and 20 years of service respectively. Workers in dangerous professions retire earlier. Pensions vary from 55 to 80% of the basic salary based on three of the last 10 years worked. In 1973, pensions were introduced for people over the age of 70 with no income and for persons disabled from birth. The

number of places in residential care for the aged and invalids have increased enormously. Mothers receive a full wage during maternity leave of 45 days before the birth of the child and up to six months after delivery. In addition, they receive the minimum wage fixed for the country until the child reaches the age of two as well as a lump sum for the birth and are entitled to a monthly family allowance until the child reaches the age of 16.

Health care and hospital treatment is free. All hospitals and clinics are state owned. Dental treatment is included in the free cover. The sale of medicine is controlled by state health authorities.

Culture The Committee for Culture is elected for a term of five years by the Congress of Culture and manages and assists all cultural institutions and organisations as well as artist's unions.

Science and Education The two main institutions for research in Bulgaria are the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Agricultural Sciences. They cover the activities of over 190 research institutes with some 8,000 research workers. Research is also carried out in colleges, museums etc. Primary and secondary education is free and about 60% of students receive state scholarships for further study. Many students from other European countries, Asia, Africa and Latin America study in Bulgaria at higher education level.

Bulgarian cultural heritage is very long and impressive. Modern culture encourages innovation as well as the preservation of tradition

LITERATURE

In the 9th century, Cyril and Methodius created the cyrillic alphabet which was also adopted by Serbia, Russia and Romania. Under Prince Boris I in Ohrid, and later under Tsar Simeon in Veliki Preslav, two outstanding literary schools were established where ancient scripts were translated and original works commissioned. During the Second Bulgarian State the Turnovo literary school was established which flourished until Bulgaria fell to the Ottoman empire. During the Ottoman rule, from 15-18th century, oral folklore carried on the literary tradition.

The origin of Modern Bulgarian literature must be placed at the time of the Bulgarian National Revival, the landmark being the publication of the Slav-Bulgarian History by Paissi of Hilendar in 1762. The works of Hristo Botev, the poet and revolutionary, followed shortly after, as well as those of the novelist Lyuben Karavelov and poet Petko Slaveikov. After liberation from the Turks the tradition continued with Ivan Va-



"Meeting General Gurko in Sofia, 1878", by Dimiter Gyudjenov

"The April 1876 Uprising", by Zlatyu Boyadjiev





Bourgas, the Petrochemical Works

zov, acclaimed the father of modern Bulgarian literature, whose works are translated into the majority of European lan-

guages.

1923-44 saw the appearance of socialist realism in Bulgarian literature with Hristo Smyrnenski, Nikola Vaptsarov and many others. Modern writers include Georgi Karaslavov, Lyudmil Stoyanov, Dimiter Talev, etc.

FINE ARTS

Artistic traditions of various civilizations were apparent on the territory of present day Bulgaria. The oldest gold treasure in the world was discovered in the Chalcolithic necropolis near Varna (3,200-3000 B.C.).. The Thracians left magnificent frescoes in the Kazanluk tomb (3rd century BC) and more gold treasures were discovered near the village of Vulchi Trun, Panagyurishte etc. The remains of palaces have survived in the old capitals of Pliska, Veliki Preslav and Veliko Turnovo. The village of Madara near Shoumen, boasts of a remarkable bas-relief, cut out of the rocks. It features a horseman piercing a lion with his spear (8th century). The frescoes in the Boyana Church (1259) and Zemen Monastery (mid-14th century) are

A view to the National Assembly and the Alexander Nevski Memorial Cathedral. In the forefront — the Monument to Liberators



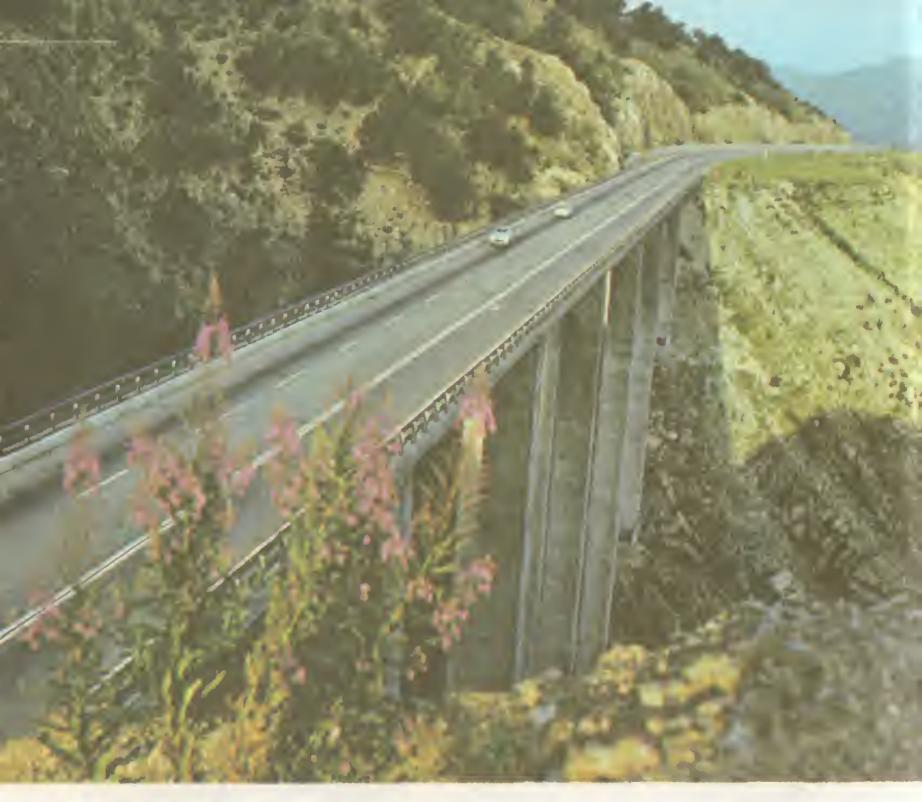
of exceptional artistic excellence. The Manasses' Chronicle (14th century), is kept at the Vatican museum; Tzar Ivan Alexander's Tetraevangelia (14th century) is in Moscow. During the Bulgarian National Revival, schools of woodcarving were established at Samokov, Bansko, Debur and Tryavna. Among the best woodcarvings are those of the Rila Monastery, church of the Virgin Mary in Pazardjik, St. Marina in Plovdiv and the Rozhen Monastery near Melnik.

ARCHITECTURE

Bulgaria has architectural monuments from the Thracian period (settlement, tombs, fortress walls), from the Ancient Greece (a settlement along the Black Sea coast — Messemvria - present day Nessebur), from the Odessos (Varna), from Appolonia (Sozopol); from the Roman Empire - Escus (now the village of Tigel), Nikopolis ad Istrum (village of Nükyup), Abritus (Razgrad), Trimontium (Plovdiv). The greatest medieval structures are in Pliska, Veliki Preslav, Turnovgrad, and Boyana. National Revival buildings of some note are in Rila, Bachkovo, Troyan, Plovdiv, Kotel, Tryavna, Koprivshtitsa, Zheravna. Of special interest are the buildings by the master builder Kolyu Ficheto (bridge near the village of Byala, Trinity Church in Svishtov, Nikoli Inn at Veliko Turnovo). More recent architecture can be seen in the buildings of the National Assembly, Ivan Vazov National Theatre, the mineral baths building, market hall and the National Museum in Sofia, theatres in Rousse and Varna, etc. Many public buildings, theatres and stadiums have been built in recent years, all pointing to a very high standard of imagination and inspired functionalism.

MUSIC

From earliest times songs recounting actual events have been handed down from generation to generation. Yoan Koukouzel, the Angel-voiced, was an important composer in the 14th century. From modern Bulgarian composers as Manolov, Dobri Hristov, Petko Stainov, Pancho Vladigerov should be mentioned. Bulgarian choral works, operas and instrumental music have gained popularity on a world scale. Many Bulgarian opera singers perform in the greatest opera houses of the world.



The Sofia-Bourgas motor way

THEATRE

The first theatres in Bulgaria were founded during the Ottoman domination (mid 19th century) and started as amateur ensembles. Professional theatre dates from 1892 when the Sulza i Smyah Drama Company was established, it became the National Theatre in 1904.

AMATEUR ART

A wealth of folk songs and dances is kept alive in every town and village in Bulgaria. Folk art is an essential ingredient of life in Bulgaria.

CINEMA

Although films were produced in Bulgaria prior to 1944, Bulgarian film has developed greatly only post 1945.

LIBRARY CLUBS

are the original Bulgarian teaching institutions which played a prominent part in preserving national traditions and the identity of the Bulgarian people during the Ottoman domination. The first theatrical performances, the first public libraries, the first choirs and orchestras originated in these clubs. Many of them have valuable collections, art galleries, radio and film clubs, photography, literature and drama circles and schools for foreign languages, music and ballet.

Physical Education and Sport. In recent years, sport has gained popularity in all walks of life and among the young in particular. The National Spartakiades are very popular and enlist the participation of thousands. Bulgarian sportsmen and women have been particularly successful in rhythmic gymnastics, wrestling, weightlifting, track and field events (women),

basketball and volleyball.

BULGARIA – A COUNTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TOU-RISM

Although Bulgaria has become a country for international holidays only in the past twenty years, it is visited by more than six million tourists annually. In recent years, the rate of development of international tourism in Bulgaria has exceeded all world rates. With every passing year the number of tourists visiting the country increases by 10-15%. This is not accidental as every attention is given to tourism: modern facilities, simplified passport and visa formalities, advantageous exchange rates, etc. However, there is more to it. Bulgaria is one of the few countries in the world which has such a diversity of attractions. The Bulgarian Black Sea coast is a happy combination of geographic and climatic conditions: warm, transparent water with insignificant tides, a coastline lined by luscious vegetation, long beaches with fine golden sand, quiet shallow coves, sunny weather and moderate humidity.

There are many modern resorts — Roussalka, Albena, Zlatni Pyassatsi, Drouzhba, Slunchev Bryag and Kamchiya, all with hotels, bars and entertainment. Romantically minded tourists will discover quiet, deserted coves with secluded

beaches all along the coast.

No less attractive are the mountain resorts of Pamporovo in the Rhodopes, Borovets and Malyovitsa in the Rila Mountain, Vitosha on Mount Vitosha near Sofia. These are popular all the year round, but especially for winter sports. Those who need spa treatment may choose between Hissar, Kyustendil, Bankya, Velingrad, Narechen, Sandanski, Vurshets, Zlatni Pyassatsi and Drouzhba.

Ancient monuments vie with natural wonders, such as the Belogradchik rocks, the Stone Forest near Varna, the stone bridges in the Rhodopes, the Isker gorge, the Melnik pyramids, the picturesque caves of Magoura, Ledenika, Sueva Doupka, Bacho Kiro, the mouth of the Ropotamo river, etc., etc.

Tourists find the diverse wealth of Bulgarian folklore very attractive and songs, dances and rituals are performed by the many music and dance ensembles at festivals all over the coun-

try.

Each year from 3rd to 7th June, the Black Sea resort of Slunchev Bryag plays host to the Golden Orpheus international pop song festival; the 15th to 25th June period is devoted to the Decade of Symphonic Music, while a competition of folk ensembles, both Bulgarian and foreign, takes place in Bourgas from 1st August to August 10th every year. There is an international choir competition in May in Varna, and in July, the Varna Summer festival has opera performances, symphony concerts and chamber music. The world famous ballet Competition, first staged in 1964, is held here every two years. Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second largest town, hosts the International Chamber Music Festival in June. The Sofia Music Week opens on 24 May each year and the programme includes symphony concerts, cantatas, oratorios and chamber music. Music Days are held every March in Rousse with symphonic concerts, opera performances and choral singing concerts. Pleven has the Katya Popova Laureate Days at the end of October in which young Bulgarian and foreign singers and instrumentalists, who were awarded prizes at international competitions, perform to Bulgarian audiences. Late in May and in early June the blossoming of roses is celebrated in Karlovo and Kazanluk, in the so called Valley of Roses.

ITINERARY TOURS

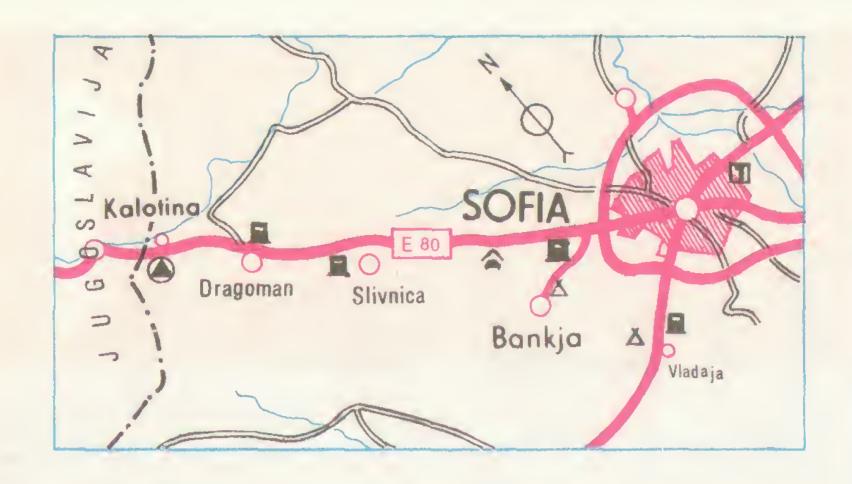


KALOTINA - DRAGOMAN - SOFIA

SOFIA — DRAGALEVTSI VITOSHA TOURIST COMPLEX

SOFIA - BOYANA CITY DISTRICT - TIHIYA KUT - ZLATNI MOSTOVE

SOFIA - SAMOKOV - GOVEDARTSI - MALYOVITSA - BOROVETS



1.KALOTINA-DRAGOMAN-SOFIA

The Kalotina border crossing point lies on the E-80 motorway on the Bulgarian-Yugoslav frontier some 55 kilometres from Sofia. Tourists entering Bulgaria can exchange money

and shop at the Corecom hard-currency shop there.

The Cheshma service area is three kilometres from Kalotina along the motorway to Sofia. There is a 100 seater snack bar, a 60 seater restaurant, and a large Corecom shop. There is an exchange bureau and a kiosk for soft drinks, fruit and vegetables.

Dragoman (population: 3,700) is 18 kilometres from Kalotina. The town was built on a site which in Roman times was a stop-over for changing the *Meldia* horses and it was called Meldia up to the Middle Ages. There is a motel of the same name. It is a frontier-check-point for entry by train.

The Slivnitsa camping site near the town of Slivnitsa (population 8,000) is open from May 1 to September 30. Both Slivnitsa and Dragoman are famous for the bitter battles waged during the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885 in defence of the reunification and independence of Bulgaria. The two-star Krasnogorsk hotel here offers two suites and 58 double rooms, a restaurant, night club, a Corecom shop, an information desk and an exchange bureau.

Some 37 kilometres from Kalotina and 18 kilometres south-west of the centre of Sofia is the Sofia-West roadside motel with 170 beds. It has a restaurant, snack-bar, coffeeshop, petrol station, car service station and tourist office.

Bankya (population: 8,500), is situated 17 kilometres south of Sofia at an altitude of 650 metres. Bankya is one of

Bulgaria's best known spas and resort centres. The climate here is extremely mild and the thermal mineral waters have a temperature from 34° to 38° C. It is recommended for people suffering from cardio-vascular diseases, high blood pressure and

neuroses with neurasthenic syndrome.

In June 1971 the World Health Organization declared Bankya a centre for post-medical specialization in cardio-vascular diseases. There are over 40 sanatoriums and preventive treatment establishments, as well as many rest houses. There are very favourable conditions for rest and recreation. In 1978 Bankya was incorporated into the metropolitan area. Shortly after leaving Bankya on the right-hand side of the road is the BANKYA camping site which has first class facilities and is

open from May 15 to September 30.

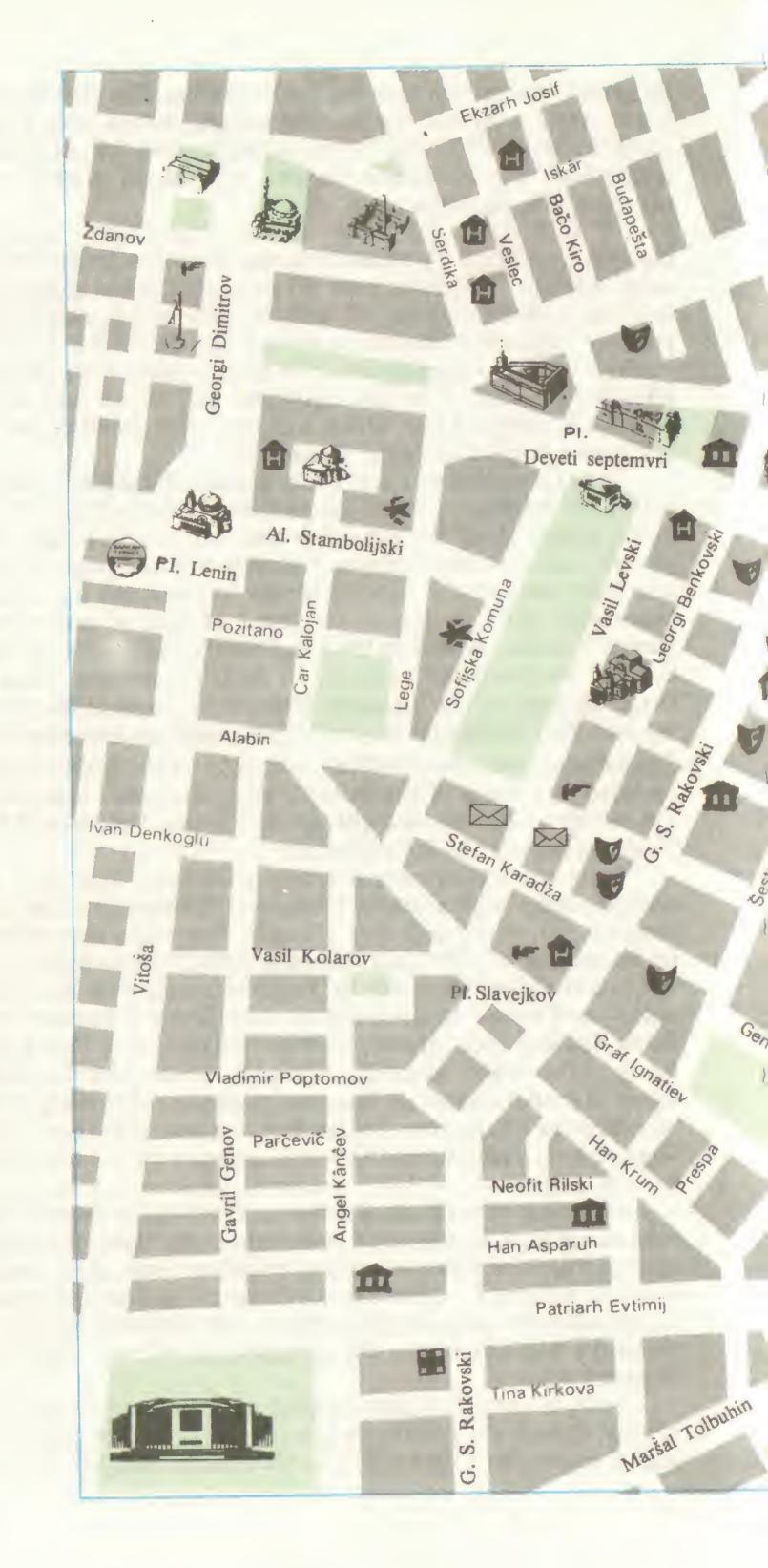
Sofia (population: 1,200,000), capital of Bulgaria, is situated in the southern part of the picturesque Sofia Plain. Its suburbs spread along the alluvial terraces of the river Iskur and its tributaries — the Vladaya, Perlovets and Souhodol Rivers, and have reached the foot of Mount Vitosha and the Lyulin Mountains. Sofia is surrounded by a garland of mountains. Mount Vitosha, closest to the city, rises to the North, and has become the invariable backdrop of Sofia's panorama. Back in the 19th century the Viennese geologist, Ferdinand Hochstetter said that Sofia and Mount Vitosha were as inseparable as Naples and Vesuvius. On the north side of the plain rise the rounded elevations of the Balkan Range; the Lozen Mountains are to the southwest and the gently sloping contours of the Lyulin Mountains to the southeast.

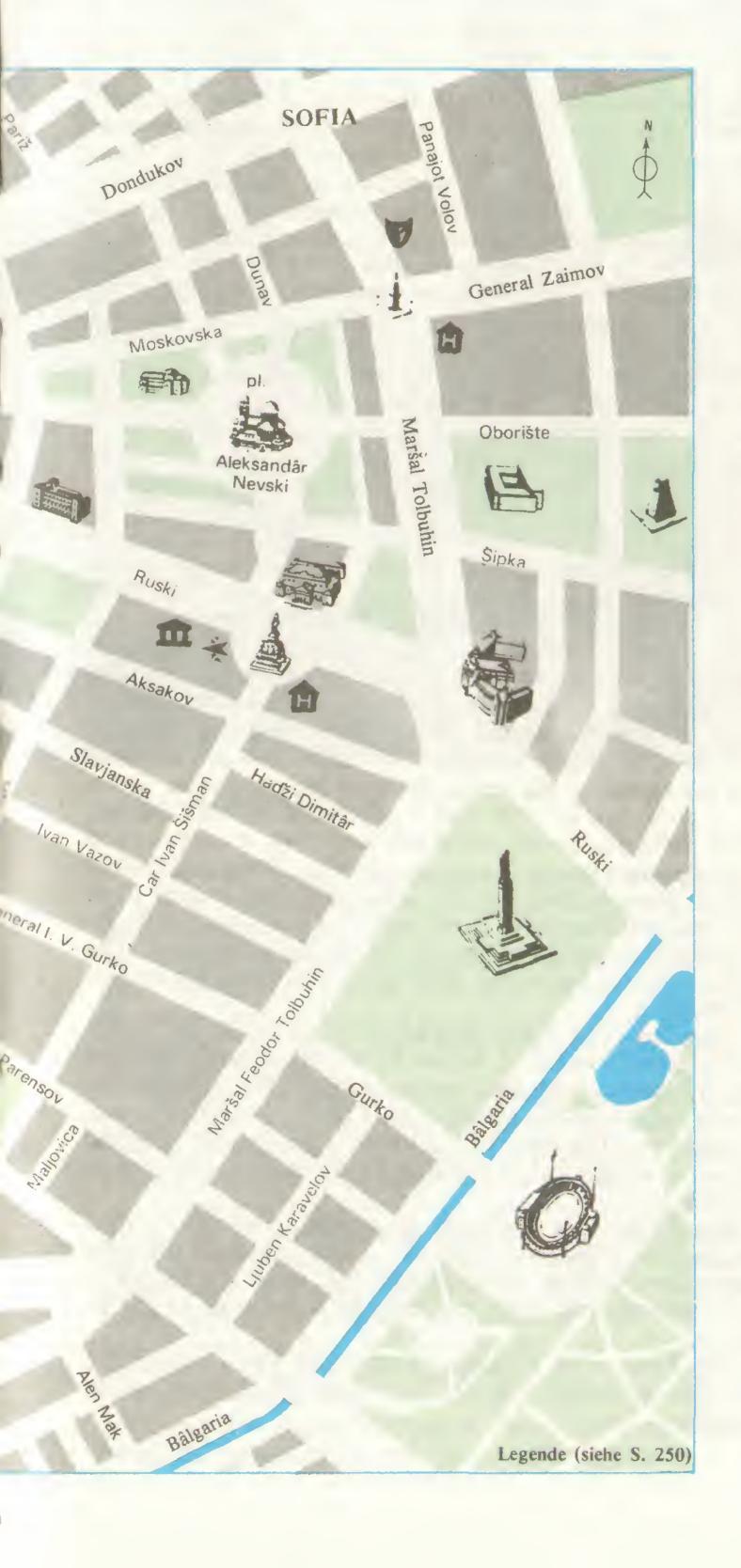
Sofia has a temperate continental climate. Because of its comparatively high altitude, summer is moderately warm and autumn dry, warm and very pleasant. The mean temperature in January is -2.3° C and in June 20° C. Sofia lies on the same latitude as Dalmatia in Yugoslavia and Nice and Marseilles in France. As it is almost mid distance between the Black Sea and the Adriatic, between Belgrade and Tirana, between Athens and Istanbul, it is easy to see why the Slavs called it Sredets (centre). The central position has made Sofia an important junction, connecting for centuries East with West and the Adriatic and Central Europe with the Black Sea

and the Aegean.

In ancient times Sofia was the centre of many thermal and mineral springs. In the town centre there are thermal mineral springs which probably played an important role in the settlement of ancient Thracian tribes in these parts. There are mineral springs with curative properties in the Ovcha Koupel, Gorna Banya and Knyazhevo city districts, as well as in Pancharevo near Sofia.

Sofia is one of the most ancient settlements in Europe. Its history dates back 5,000 years, while the most recent archaeological excavations have yielded traces going back 7,000 years.





In the 8th-7th century B.C. the Thracian tribe Serdi settled here. They were later conquered by the Romans who gave it the name of Serdica (the town of the Serdi). Emperor Trayanus (98-117) expanded the settlement and named it Ulpia Serdica, and made it a town with an independent autonomous administration. At the end of the 2nd century it was strongly fortified. In the fifth century the Balkans were overrun by the hordes of Attila the Hun who devastated the town. During the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527-565) the town was rebuilt and surrounded by strong walls and towers. In 819 it was conquered by troops of the Bulgarian Khan Kroum and was incorporated into the Bulgarian state. It was given the Slav name of Sredets. In the 11th-12th century it was conquered by the Byzantines who named it Triaditsa. Late in the 14th century the Bulgarian King Ivan Shishman issued a deed of conveyance for the property of the Dragalevtsi monastery in which the town is referred to as Sofia for the first time. The Ottoman troops besieged the strongly fortified town for quite some time but did not succeed in capturing it until 1382. They set up an administrative centre here from where they ran the affairs of almost all their European possessions. At the beginning of the 19th century Sofia began to decline. In January 1878, when the Russian General Gurko entered Sofia with his troops, the town numbered only 20,000 people. On 22 March 1879 the Constituent Assembly in Veliko Turnovo declared Sofia the capital of the newly liberated Bulgarian state. It began to grow and in 1939 had a population of 300,000. Although Sofia was heavily bombarded in 1944, it continued to be an important centre of anti-nazi acitivity. Many anti-fascists killed in street battles with the police. On 26th August 1944 the Bulgarian Communist Party called on the people of Bulgaria to rise and overthrow the rule of the fascist monarch. The first nine days of September 1944 are the historic days for modern Bulgaria.

Day One. The Soviet liberation troops reach the Romanian-Bulgarian frontier. A decree by the Bulgarian Communist Party is broadcast over the clandestine Hristo Botev Radio Station declaring that the eleventh hour for Bulgaria had struck.

Day Two. The country is without a government. Premier Bagryanov resigns and is replaced by Mouraviev who tries to

buy time.

Day Three. The Mouraviev government continues to manoeuvre. The Bulgarian Communist Party organizes mass demonstrations, strikes, meetings and calls upon the people to rebel. Partisan units from the mountains converge on the cities.

Day Four. The Bulgarian Communist Party organizes a street demonstration in Sofia. The police interfere and arrests are made.



Bankya, a balneological resort

Day Five. Several hours after the Soviet Union has declared war on Bulgaria, the Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the General Staff of the National Liberation Army hold a meeting to approve a plan for an armed uprising. The main blow has to be struck in Sofia on the night of September 8. Todor Zhivkov, Head of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army, and Peter Iliev, member of the Staff, take part in the meeting.

Day Six. A strike by tram workers paralyzes transport. Demonstrations and meetings of crucial importance to the revolutionary struggle in the country are organized. Units of the

Liberation Army occupy more than 20 villages.

Day Seven. The City Party Committee organizes a rally in the garden of the Maternity Hospital. The police attack, kill the trade unionist Peter Topalov-Schmidt and wound two commanders of combat groups. Partisans of the local detachment guarding the rally kill the policeman who fired the shot and disperse the rest of the police force. The Pernik miners and the tobacco workers in Plovdiv go on strike. Demonstrators in Pleven, Varna, Sliven and Silistra break open the prison gates and free political prisoners. Partisans liberate Gabrovo, Pazardjik, Panagyurishte and fight in other localities.



Sofia. The Sveti Georgi archaeological compound

Day Eight. The revolution spreads. Under the pressure of the people the authorities in Plovdiv, Turnovo, Rousse, Lovech, Yambol and other towns free political prisoners. Demonstrators in Gabrovo start an uprising, disarming local troops and occupying the greater part of the town.

The last secret session of the Politburo is held in Sofia in Morava Street. It decides on a surprise crucial blow at 2.00 a.m. on September 9 to occupy all military and communication centres and to establish a Popular Front government. The

main blow is to be struck in Sofia.

At 4 p.m. a session of the National Committee of the Popular Front is held in the home of Kimon Georgiev, the future Prime Minister. The composition of the government is decided

and the text of its policy approved.

Day Nine. The crucial blow is struck. In a mere half hour Bulgarian patriots seize the Ministry of War, occupy the radio, Post Office and other government departments. The ministers and regents of the fascist monarchal government are arrested. The first infantry division stationed in the capital and the police force are neutralized by units of the Chavdar partisan brigade, the local partisan detachment and the armed regiment.



Sofia. Ruins from the ancient town of Serdika

At 6.25 a.m. Kimon Georgiev broadcasts the declaration

of the newly established Popular Front government.

The new government solved many serious problems within a short period of time. Sofia gradually emerged as the main social, economic, administrative, cultural and transport centre of the country. It now accounts for nearly one fifth of Bulgaria's industrial output.

The wounds from the air raids have been healed. New public buildings have been erected, new housing complexes have been built, streets, boulevards and stadia have been reconstruct-

ed. Sofia has become a very pleasant modern city.

Sofia is the seat of the Academy of Sciences, the Agricultural Academy, the Clement of Ohrid University, Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Institute of Civil Engineering, Higher Medical School, Academy of Social Sciences and Management, Institute of Representational Arts, the Nikolai Pavlovich Institute of Dramatic Arts, the Ivan Vazov National Dramatic Theatre, the National Academy Theatre of Opera and Ballet, the Lyudmila Zhivkova People's Theatre of Youth, the Sulza i Smyah Theatre, the People's Army Theatre, the Stefan Makedonski State Musical Theatre and the Satirical Theatre and Theatre-199.

The oldest monuments discovered in Bulgaria have been preserved in the St. George Archaeological complex, the Rotunda of St. George (4th century B.C.). Nearby are the remains of a Roman street and of a Roman public building, the octagon.

St. George's church contains well preserved murals, dating

from the 10th-14th centuries.

The octagon is faced with marble and high columns support the cupola of the nave. The octagon was later used as a church, and in the 4th-6th centuries it became one of the largest churches in the town. It was destroyed a few hundred years later.

Remains from ancient Serdica

The Eastern City Gate of ancient Serdica was discovered during construction of the subway in 1969. It was part of a fortress wall about 12 metres high fortified with 14-metre-tall loopholes. The fortress wall was restored and reinforced during the course of 12 centuries.

The Western Gate is behind the Lenin monument, the Northern Gate is under the Central Supermarket in Georgi Dimitrov Boulevard and the Southern Gate lies north of Alabin

Street and east of Vitosha Boulevard.

The Triangular Tower is in the basement of the Sofia Shop where Boulevard Georgi Dimitrov crosses Exarch Yosif Street. It was one of the towers protecting the Northern Gate.

The Round Tower lies north of the Sofia Public Baths where Iskur Street crosses Serdica Street. It stood in a corner

in the north-east part of the fortress wall.

The Church of St. Sophia was built in Byzantine times (fifth or sixth century) and is a remarkable monument. In the 13th-14th centuries it was a metropolitan church and held an ecclesiastical school. In the 16th century the Ottoman rulers converted it into a mosque. It now stands in Alexander Nevsky Square.

Büyük Djamia (The Big Mosque), 15th century, is situated

at the corner of Legue St. and Stamboliiski Blvd.

Banya Bashi Djamiya, 16th century, opposite the Central Supermarket, is a typical monument of Islamic civilization.

Small Churches: St. Nikolai Russian Church on Tzar Kaloyan St., Church of St. Petka the Old at the corner of Stamboliiski Boulevard and Tzar Kaloyan St. and the Church of St. Petka Samardjiyski in the subway of Lenin Square.

Modern monuments:

Liberators Monument in front of the National Assembly by the Italian sculptor Arnoldo Zocchi, in honour of the Russian troops who liberated Bulgaria from Ottoman domination.

The Alexander Nevsky Memorial Cathedral built in gratitude and respect for the Russian soldiers who died for Bulgaria's liberation. There is a crypt with an exhibition of old icons.



Sofia. The Monument to Liberators

Sofia, the Sveta Sofia Church and the Alexander Nevski

Memorial Cathedral



There are many other monuments to the fallen from World War II all over Sofia.

The Banner of Peace monument is close to where the ring road crosses the road to Simeonovo district. It was built for the 1979 World Assembly Banner of Peace. It contains seven main bells symbolizing the seven continents, at its base are 20 musical bells, and around it are bells from all parts of the world.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is by the south wall of St.

Sophia Church.

Museums: National History Museum, 2 Vitosha Blvd. in the Palace of Justice; Archaeological Museum, Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd.; Ethnographic Museum, Sept. 9th Square; Natural Science Museum, 1 Rousski Blvd.; Museum of the Revolutionary Movement in Bulgaria, 14 Rousski Blvd.; National Military History Museum, 23 Skobelev Blvd; Church History and Archaeological Museum, 19 Lenin Sq.; Museum of Bulgarian-Soviet Friendship, 4 Klement Gottwald Blvd.; Museum of the History of Sofia, 27 Exarch Yossif St.; Dimiter Blagoev Museum, Lajos Cossuth St.; Georgi Dimitrov Museum, 66 Opulchenska Street; Alexander Stamboliiski Museum, 44 Souhodol Street; Ivan Vazov Museum, 10 Ivan Vazov Street; Petko and Pencho Slaveikov Museum, 138 Rakovski Street; Peyo Yavorov Museum, 136 Rakovski Street; Hristo Smvrnenski Museum, 116 Emil Shekerdjiiski Street; Nikola Vaptsarov Museum, 37 Angel Kunchev Street.

Interesting buildings: The Lyudmila Zhivkova People's Palace of Culture is the most impressive building in Sofia. It was designed by a team of architects under Alexander Barov. The Palace covers an area of 17,000 square metres and has se-

veral halls, the largest with 7,500 seats.

The Palace of Justice, built 1932-1935 and designed by Pencho Koichev. The building has been reconstructed and now houses National History Museum. (The collections include important exhibits from pre-historic times, from Thrace, from the Middle Ages and from the National Revival Period) Other interesting buildings are the National Assembly, the Clement of Ohrid University, the Ivan Vazov National Theatre, the National Art Gallery, the National Ethnographic Museum, the Central House of the People's Army, the Ministry of Defence, the Universiade Sports Hall, the Festival Hall, the Winter Palace of Sports, the Holy Synod Building, the Bulgarian National Bank, the Russian Church, St. Nicholas, the Cyril and Methodius National Library and many others.

Parks: Freedom Park, Hristo Smirnenski park (Western Park), Vladimir Zaimov Park, the Doctors' Monument Park, and Southern Park south of the Lyudmila Zhivkova Palace of

Culture.



Sofia. The Monument to the Soviet Army

Hotels: Vitosha New Otani (five star), 100, Anton Ivanov Street — tel. 62-41-51, with a night club — panoramic restaurant on the 19th floor, bowling alley Bulgarian restaurant and Japanese restaurant, Rodina 4, Rousski Square (four star), twenty-storeyed building with 1,053 beds, 42 single rooms, 487 double rooms and seven suites. Large and nine smaller ones, swimming pool, sauna, solarium, shops, underground garage for 220 cars, Novotel Evropa, 131 Georgi Dimitrov Blvd. — tel. 3-12-61, (four star) sixteen-storey 586 double rooms, seven suites, restaurant, night club, shops (incl. Corecom), covered parking, rent-a-car service. Grand Hotel Sofia, Narodno Sobranie Square, (three star) five-storeyed building — tel. 87-88-21. 25 single rooms, 145 double rooms, restaurant, bar, night club, tavern, Corecom shop, parking, exchange bureaux and rent-a-car service.

Park Hotel Moskva, 25 Nezabravka Street — tel. 7-12-61, eighteen-storey building with 34 single rooms, 327 double rooms, 28 suites, restaurant, bar and night club, panoramic restaurant and tavern;

Grand Hotel Balkan, 2 Lenin Square — tel. 87-65-43; Grand Hotel Bulgaria, 2 Rousski Blvd — tel. 87-19-77; Hemus, 31 Georgi Traikov Blvd. — tel. 66-14-15; Serdica, 2 Vladimir Zaimov Blvd. — tel. 44-34-11; Pliska. 87 Lenin Blvd. — tel. 72-37-21; Prostor, in Mount Vitosha — tel. 65-48-81; Shtastlivetsa, in Mount Vitosha — tel. 66-50-24; Kopito, in Mount Vitosha — tel. 57-12-56.

Tourist organizations

— Balkantourist, with the Bulgarian Tourist and Recreation Association, 1 Vitosha Blvd. — tel. 88-31-41, telex — 22583, 22584. Balkantourist offers hotels, motels, camping sites, private lodgings, villas, restaurants, bars, night clubs, cof-

fee houses and provides guides and interpreters.

Tourist Service — Balkantourist, 37 Dondukov Blvd., tel. 88-44-30, telex — 22488; Shipka — travel agency, Central Council of the Union of Bulgarian Motorists, 6 St. Sophia Street — tel. 87-88-01; Orbita — Bureau for International Youth Tourism, 45a Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd. — tel. 87-95-52; Cooptourist — for domestic and foreign tourism with the Central Cooperative Council, 99 Rakovski Street — tel. 84-41; Pirin — travel agency of the Central Council of the Bulgarian Hikers' Union, 30 Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd. — tel. 87-06-87;

Balkan Airlines (international flights), Narodno Sobranie Square — telephones 88-44-33 and 88-44-93 and 19 Legue

Street - telephones 88-49-89 and 87-54-51;

Motels:

Tihiyat Kut (two star) — on Mount Vitosha on the road leading to Zlatni Mostove 12 kilometres from the centre of Sofia — telephone 57-14-01; Boyana (three star), Boyana district — telephone 56-30-35; Goroublyane (three star), Goroublyane district — telephone 72-37-20, two-storey motel with 28 double rooms, restaurant, rent-a-car service and parking.

Camping sites:

Vrana — Goroublyane City District (three star), four bungalows with one apartment each, telephone 78-12-13; Lebed — Pancharevo lake (one star). Telephone 77-30-45; Cherniya Kos — eleven kilometres south-west of central Sofia (two star). Telephone 57-11-29; Bankya — 17 kilometres west of central Sofia (one star).

Night Clubs: Vitosha New Otani; Grand Hotel Sofia; Park

Hotel Moskva; Havana, Vitosha Blvd.

Bulgarian restaurants: Boyansko Hanche, Boyana District — telephone 56-30-16; Goroublyansko Hanche, Goroublyane District — telephone 78-12-60; Shoumako, Simeonovo District; Vodenicharski Mehani, Dragalevtsi District — telephone 66-50-88; Zlatna Ribka — 26 kilometres from Sofia on the road leading to Borovets winter resort; Chernata Kotka — 13 kilometres south-east of Sofia on the E-80 road.

Restaurants: Roubin, Lenin Square; Kristal — 119 Rakovski Street; Krim — 2 Dobroudja Street, telephone 87-01-31; Botevgradska Sreshta — 1 Pozitano Street, telephone 87-05-14;





Georgi Dimitrov's Mausoleum

Gambrinous — 80 Tsar Simeon Street, telephone 83-51-74; Budapeshta — 145 Rakovski Street, telephone 87-27-50; Ropotamo — 73 Lenin Blvd. telephone 72-25-16; Havana — Vitosha Blvd.

Coffee houses: Brazilia — 24 Vitosha Blvd.; telephone 88-28-39; Bulgaria — 2 Rousski Blvd., telephone 87-19-77; Colombia — 4 Levski Street, telephone 87-43-03; Havana — 151 Rakovski Street, telephone 87-48-94; Roza — 4 Sofiiska Komouna Street, telephone 88-40-87; Praga — 145 Rakovski Street, telephone 87-52-76; Opera — 113 Rakovski Street, telephone 87-40-89; Havana — Vitosha Blvd.

Souvenir shops: Sredets Souvenir Centre opposite Rila Hotel; Prizma — 2 Rousski Blvd., telephone 88-15-67; Sofia — 16 Georgi Dimitrov Blvd., telephone 83-29-58; Union of Bulgarian Artists souvenir shop, 6 Rousski Blvd., telephone

88-39-37; Mineralsouvenir – 10 Rousski Blvd.

Photographic materials: 3 Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd., telephone 87-72-74; Central Department Store, fourth floor, telephone 87-96-21.

Optician's: 14, Vitosha Blvd., telephone 87-18-11; 7 Graf

Ignatiev Street, telephone 87-29-43.



Sofia. The Common Grave

Florist's: 8 Pozitano Street, telephone 87-01-26; 11 Vitosha Blvd., telephone 88-20-46.

Bookshops: the Victor Hugo bookshop for foreign and

Bulgarian books, 6 Rousski Blvd., telephone 88-43-08.

The Corecom Foreign Trade Enterprise has shops selling goods manufactured abroad. These can be bought with convertible currency: 8 Tsar Kaloyan St. tel. 88-19-75; Novotel Evropa, 131 Georgi Dimitrov Blvd., tel. 3-12-61; 166 Rakovski St. tel. 88-06-73; 27 Tolbukhin Blvd., tel. 88-44-50; Grand Hotel Sofia, Narodno Sobranie Square, tel. 23-01-02; Hotel Vitosha New Otani, 100 Anton Ivanov Blvd., tel. 62-41-51; Hotel Shtastlivetsa in Mount Vitosha, tel. 66-50-24,

OUT OF TOWN TOURS

SOFIA-DRAGALEVTSI-VITOSHA TOURIST COMPLEX

Depending on the means of transport, the starting point of this route may be either your hotel or, say, the Hladilnika tram stop on Cherni Vruh Boulevard. From the Hladilnika stop take No. 66 bus to the Shatstlivetsa Hotel in Mount Vitosha. In 10-15 minutes we reach Dragalevtsi and one kilometre further, the Vodenicharski Mehani (Millers' Taprooms), a national restaurant consisting of three mills (200 years old) and a modern building, offering miller's specialities made of kachamak (fried maize dough) and meat. There is a folk orchestra and a folk dance group performing most evenings.

Two or three kilometres further on we reach Dragalevtsi Monastery, built during the reign of King Ivan Alexander (1331-1371). During the years of the Ottoman rule, the monastery played a major role in education. Note the frescoes in the monastery church. They date back to the 14th century. Across the courtyard is the residence of the Bulgarian Patri-

arch, designed by Angel Momov.

Continuing uphill for about twenty minutes, we arrive at Shastlivetsa Hotel – the biggest in the area (250 beds). There is a good general restaurant, a national restaurant (mehana), ski hire service, barber's salon and souvenir kiosk. A little below the Shastlivetsa is the Prostor Hotel (196 beds), with a general restaurant, a national restaurant, bar, night club, exchange bureau, souvenir shop, ski hire service, sauna, swimming pool, hairdresser's salon and two conference rooms. It is a convenient starting point for tours to Mount Cherni Vruh (2,290 m), the highest peak in Mount Vitosha, or to other nearby locations. Dragalevtsi can also be reached by chair lift which rises to the Bai Krustyo area. From there another lift continues to the Goli Vruh area. From Prostor Hotel, a chair lift takes you to the western part of Maluk Rezen peak (2,170 m). In addition, several chair lifts (and ski drags in the winter) are available for those wishing to reach the Stena area below the Vitosha peak. From here after about one hour's walk along the mountain ridge we reach Zlatni Mostove (Golden Bridges) in the western part of Mount Vitosha.

SOFIA-BOYANA CITY DISTRICT-TIHIYA KUT-ZLATNI MOSTOVE

The starting point for this tour is the No 64 bus stop at the corner of Hristo Mihailov Boulevard and Ivailo street in the direction of Boyana City district. Here, at the foot of



Sofia. The monument to the people's poet Ivan Vazov

Mount Vitosha, is Boyana Church, an important mediaeval building which has been declared a National Museum. The church was built in several stages, the oldest part dating from the beginning of the 11th century. According to an inscription, a two-storeyed building was erected next to it, the lower floor of which was most probably intended to be the tomb of the person who provided money to build the church. The most remarkable features of the church are the frescoes executed in 1259 by an unknown master. Mural paintings on the walls, particularly in the centre, are astoundingly well preserved, especially the richness and clarity of the colours. The scenes depict 89 episodes with more than 240 figures. Another part of the church features the patron saints of the church. The scene of the Last Supper shows many details of Bulgarian early life: on the knees of the saints we can distinguish a napkin woven in typical black and white stripes, the table holds examples of the daily diet of the common people - garlic, radishes and bread. This, together with the robes of the saints, the inscriptions in Bulgarian, etc. point to a Bulgarian authorship. The strongly individualised images of the Baby Jesus, the Virgin Mary and the scribes in the scene of the Virgin Mary with the

Baby Jesus shows that the icon painter has gone beyond the framework of traditional stylized iconpainting. The most vivid achievement of this unknown master, however, are the four portraits of the subscribers of the church — Sebastocrator Kaloyan and his wife Dessislava and the Bulgarian king Konstantin Assen and his wife Irina. The church is listed in the world cultural heritage of UNESCO.

After a 20 minutes' drive we reach the Zlatni Mostove area, topping near a cosy restaurant. Only 100 metres from the restaurant is the famous 'stone river' of boulders, dragged down by the once rushing waters of mountain rivers. There is a two-star hotel in the Kopito (hoof) area with 50 beds — tel. 57-50-51. (From Sofia, take the Number 62 bus.) The Kopito area, commanding a beautiful view of Sofia, is linked with the Knyazhevo City District by cable car.

SOFIA-SAMOKOV-GOVEDARTSI-MALYOVITSA-BOROVETS (72 KM)

After touring Sofia you may go to further afield and familiarise yourself with its surroundings. This route will take you to Bulgaria's best known winter resort. It leads south of Sofia along the Iskur dam and passes through Pancharevo. Here is a man-made lake offering excellent opportunities for aquatic sports and angling. There are mineral baths with constant water temperature of 47°C. Lebed restaurant on the lake side, many rest homes and camping site. Further on the route passes by the remains of Ourvich fortress dating from the Middle Ages. We then come to the largest dam in Bulgaria, the Iskur dam. Along the road on the left is the Sturkelovo Gnezdo (Stork's Nest) camping site (two star), with bungalows, restaurant, foods and souvenir kiosks.

The next place to see is Samokov (population 26,000), situated in Samokov valley at the foot of the Rila mountains. The town emerged in the 14th century as a major mining settlement. During the years of the Ottoman rule Samokov was well known throughout the empire as an important handicraft and commercial centre. It was particularly famous for ore. Crafts such as copperware, leather ware home-spun and wool-

len braiding were well developed here.

The Samokov school of icon painting was founded in Samokov during the Ottoman rule. A school was opened in 1832, and a library club in 1869. The art of icon painting flourished in the second half of the 18th and early in the 19th century. The icon painter Hristo Dimitrov came from the nearby village of Dospei. He studied on Mount Athos and also worked





Sofia. The Monument to the Unknown Soldier

in Vienna. The most talented pupil was Zahari Zograph, a remarkable icon painter for his time. He painted a large number of religious and secular frescoes in the first half of the 19th century. Among them are the frecsoes at Rila Monastery, Bachkovo Monastery, Troyan Monastery and Preobrazhene Monastery. Samokov master wood-carvers decorated the Metropolitan Church in Samokov and the iconostasis of the

church in Rila Monastery.

The local museum, housed in a typically Bulgarian building, traces Samokov's development over the years. Other points of interest are the Belyova Church which has many murals, by Samokov painters, the Metropolitan Church with its magnificent iconostasis, the Covent where the first school was opened, the Old House of the Obrazopissov, Ivan and Nikola Ksenofontow House, Kokoshkov House and Marikin House with their well preserved wooden carved ceilings, as well as Sarafov House, the Synagoguee, the Bairakli Mosque which is very beautiful and the big 18th century fountain in front of the community centre.

The best known Bulgarian winter resort, Borovets, is ten

kilometres from Samokov.



Sofia. The 1300 Years Bulgaria Monument

Sofia, The People's Palace of Culture





Sofia. The Bulgarian National Bank

Sofia. The National History Museum





Sofia. The Kliment of Ohrid University

An asphalt road from Govedartsi leads to the mountain resort of Malyovitsa (1,750 m), one of the most scenic areas of the Rila Mountains. South of the complex rise the steep slopes of Malyovitsa Peak (2,729 m). The resort has excellent facilities for both summer and winter holidays. Malyovitsa Hotel (1st class) has 40 double rooms with showers and 30 three bedded rooms, restaurant, night-club and other facilities.

It is an ideal winter sports centre: skiing grounds for competitions and for amateur downhill runs, a slalom track,

and nursery slopes with drag lifts.

The Malyovitsa complex is a starting point for hikes in the Rila Mountains: Malyovitsa Chalet, at an altitude of 2,050 m. Malyovitsa Peak (a three hours' walk), Ourdina Lakes or the Seven Lakes (a walk of 4-5 hours), Rila Monastery (6-7 hours away), etc.

Borovets

Situated at an altitude of 1,300 m in the northern folds of the pine-covered Rila Mountains, it has an excellent climate for summer and winter holidays: low humidity, good sunshine record and temperatures ranging between +21.0°C in summer and 1.1°C in winter contribute to its pleasant atmosphere.



Sofia. The Cyril and Methodius National Library

Sofia. The Central Railway Station





Sofia. The Ivan Vazov National Theatre

As a winter holiday centre, Borovets offers many ski runs, the longest being Yastrebets (3,100 m with a drop of 860 m) served by a cable car, downhill run (2,400 m with 450 drop), slalom track (450 m, drop 120), 80 m ski jump, nursery slopes, etc. Every year, international ski competitions held here

form a part of the European skiing championships.

Balkantourist hotels are in the centre of the resort: Bor Hotel — (three star) with 8 single rooms, 37 double rooms and three de luxe suites, restaurant, orchestra, night club, tavern, etc. Edelweiss Hotel — (two star) with 14 single rooms, 64 double rooms and two suites, restaurant and bar. Skis, sledges, skates and other equipment are available for hire. Moussala Hotel — (three star), with 11 single rooms 85 double rooms, restaurant, bar, rent-a-car service and an exchange bureau.

Near the main skiing area is Hotel Iglika, run by the Pirin Tourist Bureau with 17 double rooms, with private baths, 22 double rooms and 48 rooms with four and eight beds each. A small restaurant caters for the area around the hotel.

Places to reach from Borovets are: Mount Moussala (2,925 m) — the highest peak in the Balkans. Malyovitsa Peak (2,729



Sofia. The Russian Church of St Nicholas

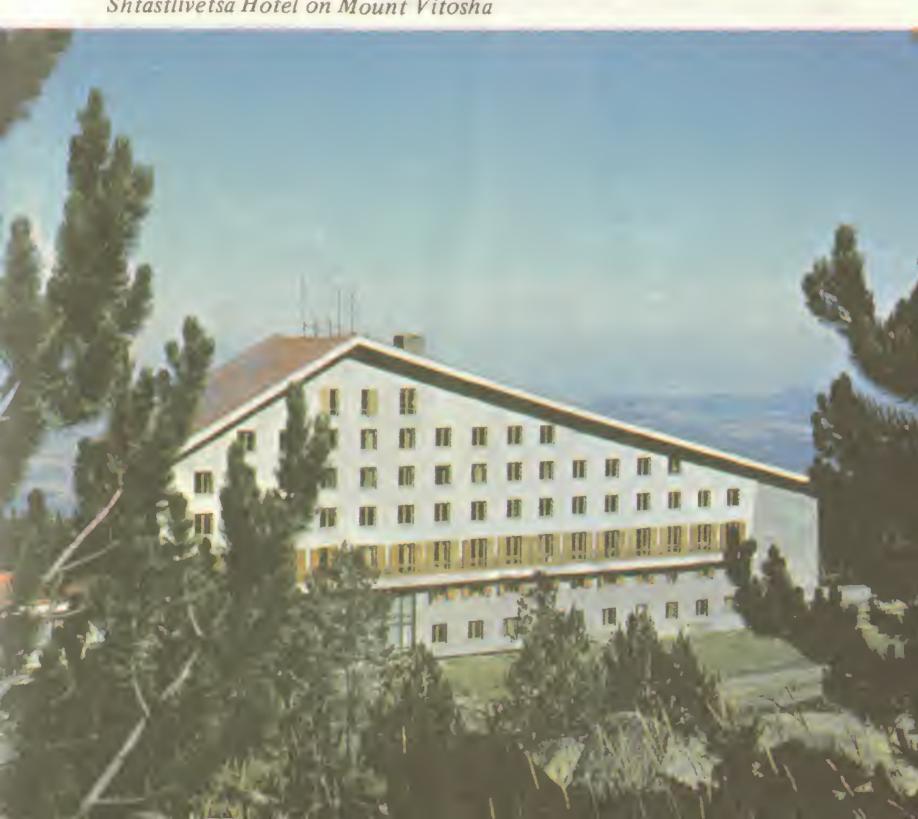
Sofia. Vitosha-New Otani Hotel





Sofia. A fragment of the murals in Boyana Church |Dessislava|

Shtastlivetsa Hotel on Mount Vitosha





The mountain resort of Borovets

Malyovitsa, A hotel of the Pirin tourist bureau





Ski tracks and ski tows close to the Vitosha resort complex

m), the Black Rock, the former palaces of Sitnyakovo, Bistritsa and Sarugyol, Sokolets. To Zavrachitsa Peak (2,178 m) is a 6-hour climb from Borovets. The chalet at the top caters for 80. The skiing area on Zaveachitsa Peak is excellent. Yastrebets Peak (2,350 m) is a 3 hours climb or you can take a lift right up to the peak.

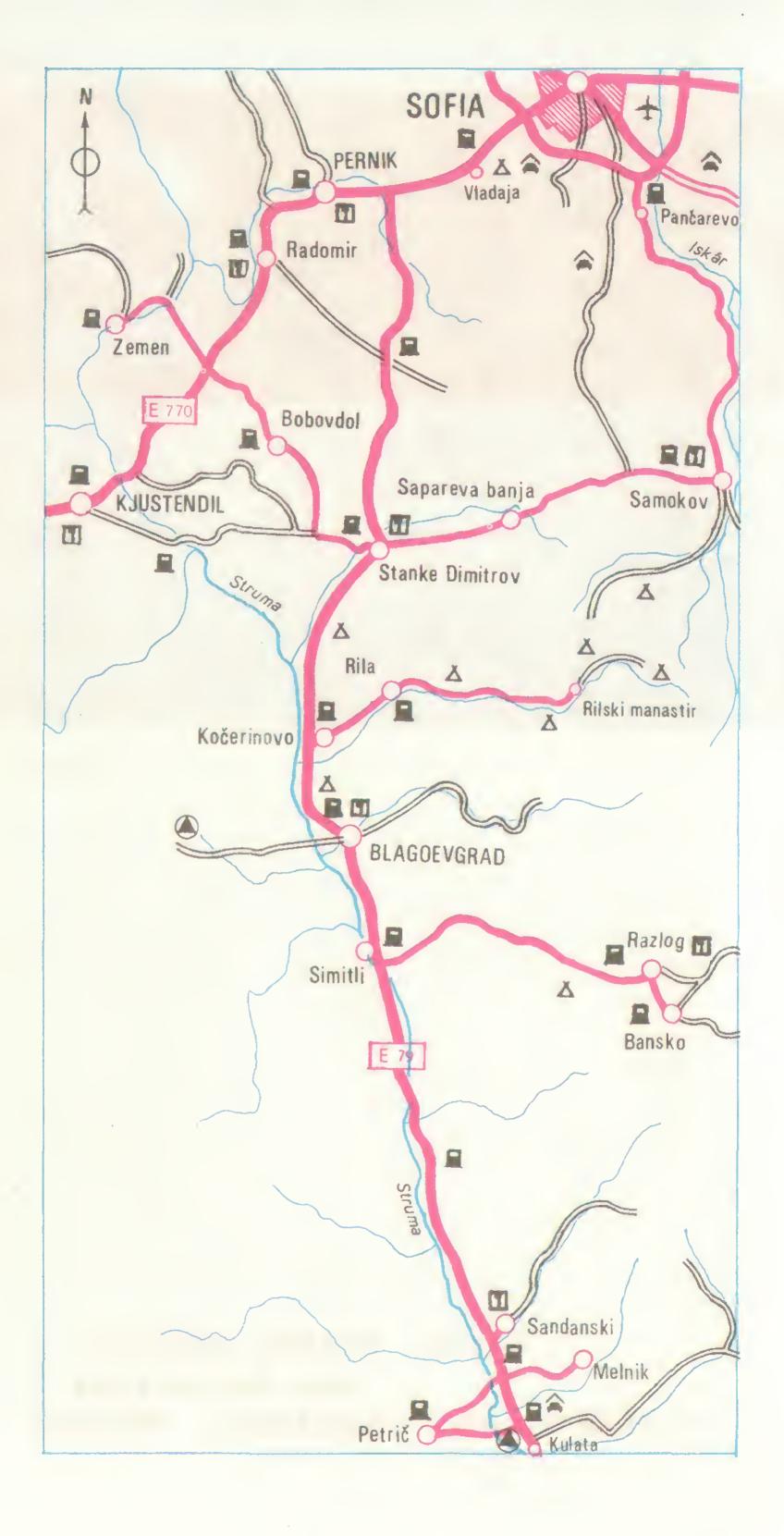
Borovets has a post office, a medical clinic, exchange bureau, tourist information office and souvenir stands. The resort is recommended for the treatment of chronic inflammation of the respiratory tract, bronchitis, laryngitis, hypertonia, atheroselerosis, diabetis and silicosis

sclerosis, diabetis and silicosis.



Samokov

SOFIA - STANKE DIMITROV -RILA MONASTERY -BLAGOEVGRAD - SANDANSKI - MELNIK



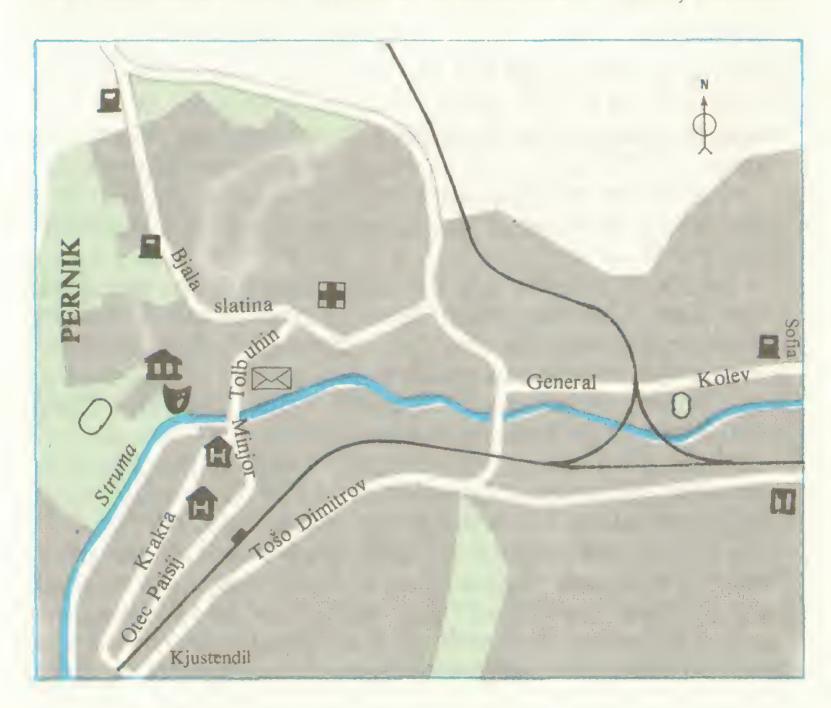
2. SOFIA-STANKE DIMITROV-RILA MONASTERY-BLAGOEVGRAD-SANDANSKI-MELNIK (181 KM)

Starting from the south-western Sofia (part of the E-79 international motorway) — via the Knyazhevo suburb, drive along the Vladaya Gorge. To the left you will see an impressive monument commemorating the Soldiers' Mutiny at the end of World War I (autumn 1918) when influenced by the October Revolution, soldiers left the front for Sofia to overthrow the

monarchy.

The road forks after about 30 km. To the right is the road to *Pernik* (population 90,000) — a large mining and industrial centre. On the west side of the town rise the high terraces of the local park. Here once stood a medieval fortress of Krakra of Pernik, a Bulgarian feudal ruler from the second half of the 10th century. Hotel Strouma has 26 single rooms, 111 double rooms and 2 suites, restaurant, bar, coffee-shop and hairdressers' salon. The next town is Stanke Dimitrov (population 43,000) situated on the banks of the Djerman River at the foot of the Rila Mountains. This area was inhabited in ancient times by Thracian tribes. During the Middle Ages several fortresses stood here, but were destroyed by the Ottoman invaders.

After Bulgaria fell under Ottoman rule, the settlement developed as a centre of crafts and stockbreeding. After Bulgaria's liberation from Ottoman domination in 1878, tobacco





The Rila Monastery

growing was developed and the town grew rapidly. Doupnitsa, as the town was then called, was the birth place of an outstanding figure in the Bulgarian Communist Party, Stanke Dimitrov (1899-1944), whose name the town bears today.

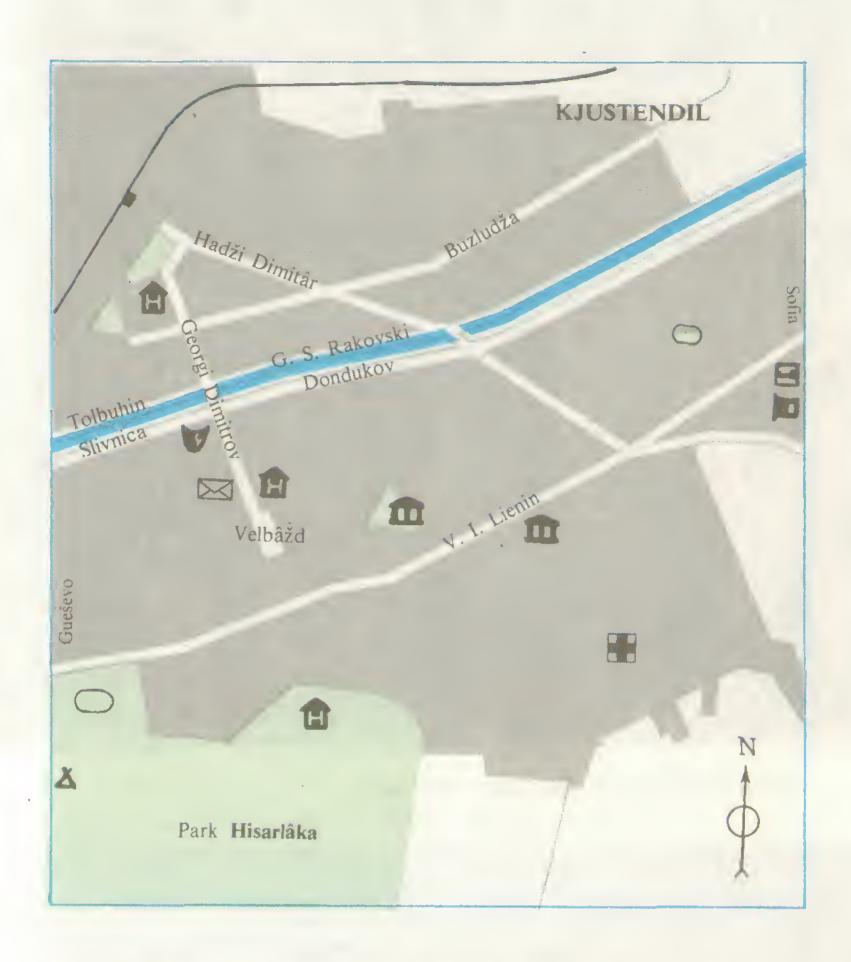
During the years of popular rule, Stanke Dimitrov developed and is now one of the country's largest tobacco-produ-

cing centres.

Points of interest are the local museum, the old clock tower dating from the end of the 17th century and the Stanke Dimitrov Museum. Hotel Rila — (two star), has 14 single rooms, 94 double rooms and 2 suites, restaurant, bar, coffeeshop, information desk and souvenir stand. There are filling

stations and a repair service station.

A road branches off to the right from Stanke Dimitrov and leads to Kyustendil (population 51,000). Kyustendil dates back thousands of years and is one of the oldest towns in Bulgaria. The Roman conquered it in 46 A.D. and developed it further to their own needs. They named the place 'a town of springs'. Pautalia grew rapidly in the 3rd century A.D. and became a large trading centre. Lying between Macedonia and Serdica (Sofia), Pautalia's warm mineral springs and its mild,



almost Mediterranean climate turned it into an important spa. According to historical data, the Roman Emperor Ulpia Trajan (98-117) suffered from a skin disease which was cured there. As a token of gratitude to the God of medicine, Ascelius, he named the town Ulpia Pautalia and contributed to its further development. In the 11th century, the town was known as Velbuzhd, and in the 15th century, as Konstantinilli, after the ruler of that time, Konstantin Dragash. Eventually it came to be known as Kyustendil and is today a modern town and a major fruit-growing centre. However, Kyustendil is best known for its mineral water whose temperature is as high as 74°C. It is rich in sulphates and hydrogen sulphates and has various curative properties. There is a modern hydropathic medical centre and therapy includes mud treatment, paraffin wraps, etc. The waters are recommended for treatment of chronic inflammation and generative diseases of the joints, diseases of the peripheral nervous system and the spinal cord, chronic gynaecological disorders, sterility, chronic intoxication from metals such as lead, bismuth and mercury.



The Rila Monastery. The inner courtyard

Tourist attractions: the Pirgova Tower (15th century), the Church of St. George (12th-13th centuries). On the Hissarluk hill above the town are the ruins of the majestic Asclepion and a Middle Age fortress. There is also the Vladimir Dimitrov Art Gallery with paintings by the artist, as well as works of other local artists. Hotels: Velbuzhd (three star) with 59 single rooms, 97 double rooms and 10 suites, bar, night club, banqueting hall, panoramic coffee shop, conference room and a billiards room; Pautalia — (two star) with 8 single rooms, 48 double rooms and 4 suites; Hissarluka — (one star), with 8 double rooms and one suite.

Of particular interest are the murals at Zemen Monastery, 25 km from Kyustendil. Outstanding among the frescoes are portraits of Deyan, a feudal ruler of Kyustendil and his wife Doya, the founder of the monastery. The monastery can be reached by train from Sofia or Kyustendil, or by car.

The Ethnographic Museum contains dresses, fabrics, finery and handicraft from the 19th and early 20th century.

The District History Museum was founded in 1897 and has five sections: archaeology — housed in the Ahmed-Bei



Blagoevgrad

Blagoevgrad. The Monument to Dimiter Blagoev



mosque; National Revival Period and National Liberation Struggles — in the house of Voivode Dyado Ilyo; Ethnography and the History of Capitalism and Revolutionary Working-Class Movement — in the Maiorova House (The Major's House), and Socialist Construction — in the Emfidjiev House — head-quarters of the Russian troops during the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War of liberation.

Return to the E-79 highway and continue south of Stanke Dimitrov. A road branches off to the left leading to Rila and Rila Monastery — the most important architectural and historical monument in Bulgaria from the Bulgarian National Revivalperiod founded by the hermit Ivan of Rila in the 10 th century. Tucked away in the mountains, away from major roads, the monastery enjoyed the rights of the Charter granted by Bulgarian kings and observed by the sultans. Towards the end of the 18th century the marauding Kurdjali bands destroyed the monastery. It was completely restored in the first half of the 19th century. Situated at an altitude of 1,147 metres, it occupies an area of 32,000 sq m and is surrounded by stone walls around two metres thick and 24 metres tall.

Hrelyo Tower, built in 1335, is the oldest suriving structure. On the top floor is the small Chapel of the Transfiguration with 14th century mural paintings. The main church rises in the centre of the enclosure and has decoration executed by wood-carvers from the Samokov, Debur and Razlog schools. The murals are the work of Samokov, Bansko and Razlog

painters and by Zahari Zograph.

Of particular note are the guest rooms of the monastery which were furnished by other towns and therefore bear their names: The Koprivshtitsa Room, The Pazardjik Room, The Samokov Room, The Sofia Room, etc. The Refectory is a rare piece of architecture - note the large fire place, fine arcades and vaults. The monastery library contains over 20,000 books, a large number of manuscripts, old incunabula and beautifully bound books of Gospel. The museum also holds old parchments, icons, Herelyo's throne and the original door of the church - the work of 14th century wood-carvers. Of special interest is the miniature cross made by the monk Raphael who worked on it for 12 years. Unfortunately the work has cost him his eye sight. It has 140 biblical scenes with more than 1,500 human figures, no bigger than a grain of rice, sculptured by a needle. In the ethnographic section of the Museum are various objects and costumes, mainly offerings by pilgrims from all over the Balkan peninsula.

Rila Monastery has been included in the World Cultural

Heritage Fund and is under the protection of UNESCO

The new Hotel Rilets — (three star) has 14 single rooms, 64 double rooms and 5 suites. There is a drag-lift near the hotel.

Interesting excursions can be made from the monastery to the Partisan Meadow at the foot of peaks Dvouglav and Iglata. Two hours' walk leads to Brichebor Peak, five hours' walk to the Dry Lake, and six hours' walk — to the Ribni Ezera (Fish Lakes).



Eleven kilometres from Kocherinovo is *Blagoevgrad* (population 55,000), the largest town in the south-west of the country. It is situated on the banks of the Blagoevgradska river. The town was built on the ruins of the ancient Thracian town of Scaptopara (3rd century B.C.), traces of which can still be found. The town was later destroyed to be rebuilt again in the 16th century under the Turkish name of Djoumaya (Market). It was a trading centre on the road leading south along the valley of the river Strouma.

Today Blagoevgrad is an industrial centre and potential for development. Around the town are mineral springs which were famous even in ancient times. The temperature of the water is around 60°C. There are two modern hotels, Alen Mak—(three star), with 22 single and 138 double rooms and two suites, restaurant, bar, and souvenir shop; Hotel Bor—(two star), with 29 double rooms, four apartments, restaurant. There is a car service rooms, four apartments, restaurant. There is a car service station on the road to Sofia. The address of the District Council of Motorists is 6 N. Vaptsarov, tel. 55-44. The town of Simitli (population 6,500) is 17 kilometres



Bansko. A bust of Neofit of Rila

to the south and has 30 hot springs with water temperatures round 60°C. From here a road forks left to the picturesque mountain towns of Razlog (population 17,000) and Bansko (population 12,000) in the foothills of the Pirin Mountains. Original buildings architectural interiors have been preserved in Bansko. It is the birth place of the founder of Bulgaria's Revival, Paissi of Hilendar (1723) and of the eminent Bulgarian poet and revolutionary, Nikola Vaptsarov, whose house is now a museum. Of particular interest are the old houses of Todev, Sirleshov and Vilyanov, as well as the Church of the Virgin Mary built when Bulgaria fell under Ottoman domination. During the second half of the 18th century an unknown woodcarver made the iconostasis similar in artistic merit to that of Rila monastery. The new Church of St. Trinity differs from other Bulgarian churches. Its architecture is reminiscent of Italian belfries although it was built by local masters. Its murals are the work of Dimiter Molera and Belyan Ognev. The Belfry and the Clock Tower were erected in 1846 to the design of the local master Gligor Dyov. Todor Hadjiradanov from Bansko was the clock maker,



The monument to Paissi of Hilendar

Other prominent Bulgarians are also associated with Bansko. In 1896 the Bulgarian revolutionary, Gotse Delchev, taught here. For four months he lived in Todev's house whence he directed preparations for the 1903 uprising of Macedonia.

Visitors can stay at the Balkantourist Pirin Hotel which has 103 rooms and five suites, restaurant and night club. There is also a hostel with accommodation for 150. Bansko is a good

starting point for exploring the Pirin Mountains.

Sandanski (population 20,500) is situated 50 kilometres south of Simitli on the bank of the Bistritsa River. It is a spa with hot springs whose temperatures range from 37°C to 72°C at source. It is used for curative purposes and for heating the green houses in the town. The climate here is mild of Mediterranean character. The mean annual temperature is 14°C, the highest in the country, and the relative humidity averages 66 per cent. The favourable weather conditions allow Sandanski to operate as a spa—all the year round. There is a new sanatorium offering heart treatment, inhalation, paraffin wraps, corrective exercises, massage, etc. The waters are recommended for the treatment of diseases of the respiratory



tract such as chronic bronchitis, tracheitis, tracheobronchitis, light and moderate forms of emphysema, bronchial asthma and asthmatic bronchitis, as well as chronic diseases of the

joints and gynaecological diseases.

The Sandanski Hotel — (four star), has seven single, 288 double rooms and five suites. There are modern facilities for balneological treatment: indoor and outdoor swimming pools, sports halls, sauna. Other facilities include a bowling alley and garage for 200 cars. Tel. 50-00. The Spartak Hotel — (two star) has 27 single and 50 double rooms, seven suites, restaurant, bar, night club and coffee-shop. Tel. 24-25.

At the entrance of the town is a monument to Spartacus (74-71 B.C.), a descendant of the Thracian tribe Medi that lived in the area of the middle course of the river Strouma.

About 12 kilometres south of Sandanski, at the village of Delchevo, the road forks left to *Melnik*, the smallest town in Bulgaria with a population of 480. In the Middle Ages the Bulgarian Boyar Alexi Slav had his residence there (1215). The town prospered and during the National Revival (18th and 19th century) reached the peak of its cultural and economic development.

The oldest and most important piece of architecture in Melnik is Boyar House, the oldest domestic structure in Bulgaria, built between the 10th and the 14th centuries. The Kordopoulo House (1754) dominates the town and is a veritable fortress. Its rooms are decorated with murals and woodcarvings. Deep in its basements, cut into the sandstone are huge wine

cellars where the famous Melnik wine matures.

Pashova House is now a museum with many woodcarvings and painting on glass. South of Melnik in Slav Park are the ruins of the old St Nicholas Monastery, built in the 13th century. Not far away are the ruins of the fortress of the despot Alexi Slav, dating from the beginning of the 13th century.

Melnik Hotel — (two star), an original three-storeyed building whose architecture is in perfect harmony with the environment and the beautiful scenery. It has 34 beds in single and double rooms, restaurant, banqueting hall for 30 and bar.

Six kilometres south of Melnik is Rozhen Monastery (14th century). The Monastery Church, built in 1600, has a marvellous carved iconostasis, other rare icons and exquisite glass paintings.

Melnik lies about 186 kilometres from Sofia along the

E-70 highway.

At the village of Delchevo the road branches towards Petrich (population 26,500). In the Middle Ages and during the Second Bulgarian State, Petrich played an important role as a fortress protecting Bulgaria against foreign invasions. During



Melnik

World War I, the town was completely destroyed. The local industry includes wood processing, tobacco goods, manufacture, canneries and greenhouse market gardening.

The warm climate, the curative properties of the waters and the beautiful scenery have contributed to the development of Petrich as a resort. There are good sport facilities in winter, used by both Bulgarian and foreign athletes. The mineral waters gush forth from springs in the extinct volcano, Kozhouh in the Kozhouh Mountains. It lies 10 kilometres from Petrich. Part of the mountains have been declared a national park. The waters have high mineral content and hyperthermal properties (77°C). They are used to treat arthritis and diseases of the peripheral nervous system.

The Bulgaria Hotel — (two star), run by Balkantourist, is in the centre of the town. It has 160 beds and a restaurant.

The ruins of the ancient town of Petra can be seen on the slopes of the Kozhouh. Foundations of public buildings and parts of a fortress wall have been preserved. Fifteen kilometres west of Petrich is the Samouil Fortress Park and Monument,



Melnik. The Kordopoulov House

between the mountains of Belassitsa and Ograzhden. Remains of walls where battles were waged between Bulgarian troops and the Byzantine Emperor Basil II are still visible.

Thirteen kilometres from Petrich is the Koulata frontier check point. There is a restaurant, motel, camping site, food kiosk and Corecom shop.

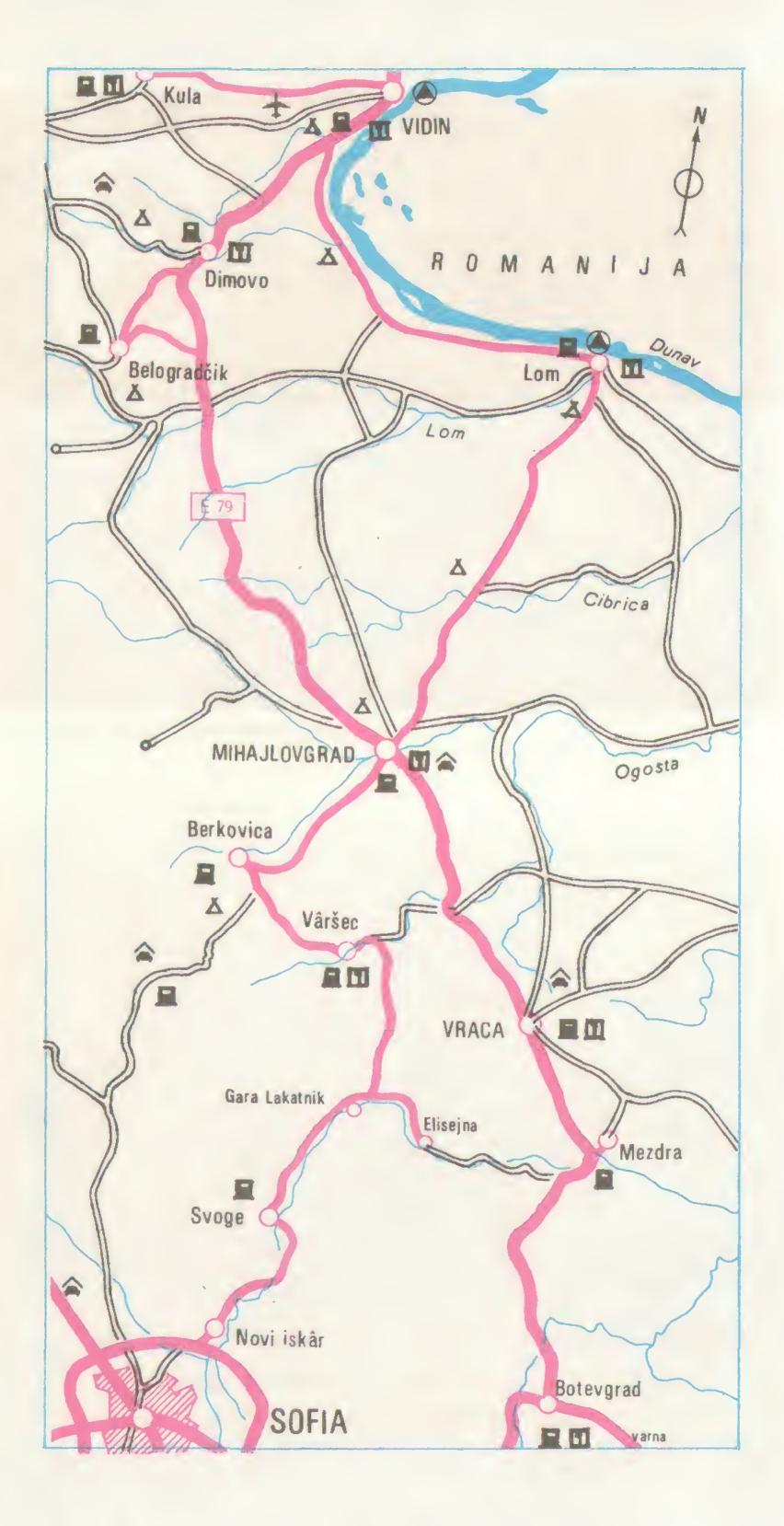


Petrich. A general view



3

SOFIA - NOVI ISKUR - SVOGE LAKATNIK MEZDRA - VRATSA - MIHAILOVGRAD BELOGRADCHIK - VIDIN - KOULA



3. SOFIA – NOVI ISKUR – SVOGE – LAKATNIK – MEZ-DRA – VRATSA – MIHAILOVGRAD – BELOGRADCHIK – VIDIN – KOULA

The town of Vidin can be reached by three routes. The first is through the Vitinya Pass and north through Botevgrad and Vratsa, the second is through the Petrohan Pass, Berkovitsa and Mihailovgrad, and the third passes through the picturesque Isker Gorge. We start from the north industrial region of Sofia. The first town we reach is Novi Isker (pop. 15,000) 17 km from Sofia, at the entrance to the Iskur Gorge. A few kilometres west are the Kutina pyramids, rock formations situated at the foot of the Sofiiska mountain. The Iskur Gorge begins from Novi Iskur and is most picturesque up to the village of Lyutibrod. It was formed by the erosion caused by the waters of the River Iskur.

Between Novi Iskur and the village of Bov, the river passes among friable rocks, the gorge is wide with well-cut terraces. Sheer rocks loom large on both sides, some 250 m high, and the gorge resembles a canyon. The village of Vlado Trichkov is next with 1,600 inhabitants. It is named after a partisan leader. The village of Rebrovo (pop. 1,500) is situated at the source of the River Batuliiska in the Iskur. Four kilometres away is Batuliya where on May 23rd 1944, partisan units battled with the gendarmerie. Many heroes of the National Liberation Army were captured and killed during the days that followed, including Major William Frank Thompson, member of the British mission to the Bulgarian partisans. The small rail-

way station bears his name.

Svoge is the largest town in the gorge — (pop. 8,200). It is a centre for coal-mining and food industry. The nearby village of Iskrets (2,700) has sanatoria for TB and heart disorder sufferers. The sheer rocky slopes of the Lakatnik Karst area just opposite Lakatnik railway station provide excellent opportunities for mountaineering. Perched high on a rock like a squirrel's nest is a small Alpine chalet. Not far away is a monument to the rebels shot down after the defeat of the September 1923 anti-fascist uprising. A veritable kingdom of caves begins here. The well-known Temnata Doupka cave is some three kilometres long; an underwater river flows through it, forming several lakes, and finally surfacing. The Mechata Doupka cave is 480 km in length.

Near the railway station of Cherepish is the Cherepish Monastery, founded in the 14th century. During Ottoman domination it was plundered and devastated several times and was

restored in the late 16th century.

The village of Lyutibrod (900) is the furthermost point of the gorge's mountain part. Three sheer parallel rocks resembling large ribs may be seen from a great distance. These are the Ritli, one of the most interesting rock formations in the



The Iskur gorge

gorge. To the southwest is the Rashov Dol area where 12 rebels from Hristo Botev's detachment fought their last battle

with Ottoman Turks in May 1876.

Further along the E-79 motorway is *Mezdra* — a large railway junction. Its population numbers 14,000. It is an industrial town known for beer, ceramics, stone and marble. There is a modern hotel and a restaurant. Outside Mezdra, the road leaves the gorge and goes to the Vratsa plain. To the southwest on Mount Okolchitsa is a monument commemorating Hristo Botev and his detachment, which landed at Kozlodoui on May 17, 1876. After a hard battle at Milin Kamuk on May 18, in which thirty soldiers were wounded and killed, the detachment retreated on May 19 to Veslets peak. The morning of May 20 found the rebels in Vratsa where they fought Ottoman troops all day long. At dusk Hristo Botev was killed just below Kamarata peak.

Vratsa (pop. 65,000) is situated at the foot of the mountain, in the Vratsata gorge formed by the Leva river. Archaeological investigations show that the town existed in the Middle Ages. An 8th-century inscription mentions the fortress was called Vratitsa (small door), hence the name today. During the



The Iskur gorge, the Ritlite rock formation

National Revival, Sofronii Vrachanski was appointed first Bulgarian bishop here and first secular school was opened here in 1822. Three partisan detachments were based in the Vratsa

district during the 2nd World War.

After 1944, the town became a large-scale industrial centre. The town has its own theatre, a philharmonic orchestra, a district history museum and an art gallery. Tourist attractions include the District History Museum, located partly in the museum and partly in Meshchil Tower. Several historical periods are exhibited: Paleolithic, Neolithic, Roman and Middle Ages—in the tower, while the central building houses Thracian culture, and more recent exhibits. Here is the Thracian gold, discovered in a Thracian tomb. The Kourtashov' and the Meshchii towers were fortresses built in the 17th century. The Ledenika compound is 17 km southwest, among meadows and ancient beech-woods. It has 5 rest houses, 2 prophylactic treatment establishments, one hotel and restaurant. South is the famous cave formed some two and a half million years ago. The cave has several underground caverns, most of them open to visitors.

Hotels in Vratsa – Hemus – (2 star), accommodating 180 (tel. 2-35-81) and Balkan, (one star), accommodating 85, tou-



rist hostel – 40 beds, the Dubnika motel – along the road to Pleven (24 beds) and 200 beds in the Ledenika compound; the Hushove hotel – 3 km from town where the road forks near Pavolche, accommodating 78 and with a large restaurant (tel. 2-75-70).

Mihailovgrad (population 50,000) is the next big town along the route. There was a settlement on this site under the Romans when its name was Montana. It was an important and strong fortress and one of the large gold centres of the Balkans. The Slavs named it Koutlovitsa (1576), while in 1891 it was named after Tsar Ferdinand. Since 1945 it has borne the name of our leading revolutionary Hristo Mihailov. The town was an important centre for the September 1923 Uprising. Today it has a well developed industry.

The town's main street is Georgi Dimitrov Boulevard. The largest shops are here, the drama theatre — a pleasant modern building, the youth and trade-union buildings, the district library and the library club. The town centre is very spacious with modern buildings. At the railway station you can see the engine and the gun which were used in the September 1923 uprising. A shady boulevard leads to the public gardens. On



the right is the Ogosta hotel and restaurant. The hotel is an eight-storey building accommodating 113. There is a restaurant, with outdoor terraces. (tel. 26-11/69-51). Another hotel — Zhitomir — 2 stars, 178 rooms, restaurant, bar, cafeteria and an information office. The main Council buildings are located in the main square. In front of them stands a monument to members of the September Uprising. It's three flames depict the three landmarks of the town — 1688, 1923 and 1944. Not far from the town is the September Uprising Museum. In the Kaleto fortress archaeologists have discovered walls and remains of ancient buildings, stone blocks with inscriptions, ceramic fragments. The necropolis at the foot of Kaleto fortress, the sanctuary and the huge temple to Apollo and Artemis are of particular interest. Many archaeological finds are exhibited in the archaeological museum

The picturesque town of Berkovitsa (pop. 17,000) is situated south of Mihailovgrad. There was a settlement there from ancient times. The town is surrounded by rich orchards and raspberry plantations. Tourist attractions include Ivan Vazov Museum, where he lived in 1879 and 1880 as chairman of the district court; the Ethnographic Museum with an art gallery — exhibiting works by several generations of local artists, a museum collection on the revolutionary Emil Markov, who was born in the town and who died in a skirmish with the police in Sofia in 1943; the Kaleto fortress with its basilicas and buildings from early Christian times. Discoveries show that there was a settlement from the mid-third millennium B.C. until the late Middle Ages. Here is Hotel Mramor with restaurant, accommodating 96.

The spa resort of *Vurshets* (pop. 7,000) is 18 km from Berkovitsa on the road to Vratsa. The water temperature ranges from 33.6°C to 36.6°C and has a low mineral content and is beneficial for treatment of functional and cardio-vascular diseases, neuroses, rheumatism and diseases of the joints. There are several hydropathic sanatoria and rest houses and hostel. The Balkantourist Zdravets hotel has 140 beds, a restaurant and disco (tel. 21-61), The Nezabravka villa has a museum collection tracing the revolutionary history of the region.

Continue along E-79 and 53 km from Mihailovgrad turn left to Belogradchik. Nearby is one of Bulgaria's interesting natural phenomena — the Belogradchik Rocks. A French traveller in 1841 wrote about this unique world of rocks: 'We left Belogradchik and an undreamt of landscape burst upon us. We wandered among intertwining gorges surrounded by scarlet rocks of most bizarre shapes. These solitary rocks or groups of rocks were now like Egyptian obelisks, now like enormous stalagmites, or resembled animals, ships or houses... The famous Oliul gorges in Provence, the Pancorbo defile in Spain, the Alps, the Pyrenes the oldest mountains in Tyrol or Switzerland — all these are incomparable with what I saw near Be-



Mihailovgrad

logradchik in Bulgaria.' The rocks cover an area 30 km long and 3 km wide. In the 1st century the Romans built a fortress among the rocks, which guarded the road between Ratsiaria (present-day Archar) on the Danube and Naisus (Nis) on the Nishava. This fortress is associated with the unsuccessful uprising in North-west Bulgaria in 1850; Russian liberating troops in 1878 participants of the 1923 Uprising and partisans in 1943-1944 have all passed this way. In the town of Belogradchik (pop. 7,300) is a Hotel Belogradchik Rocks, two stars, accommodating 134 (tel. 31-51), Narcoop hotel — 70 beds, a tourist hostel — 160 and the Madonna camping site with 40 beds in bungalows.

Back to the E-79 and before reaching Dimovo turn left to-wards the village of Rabisha. A solitary unwooded hill, Magoura, towers over Rabisha lake. On its southern slope is the entrance to the world-famous Magoura Cave. For millions of years water has moulded the soft limestone rocks, creating a spacious underground world. The cave is well-appointed, with electricity, convenient staircases and paths leading to underground passages. Remains of clay vessels, animal bones, fire-places and iron objects were found in the cave, showing that it



The Belogradchik rocks

The Belogradchik fortress





Rock drawings in the Magourata cave

was inhabited as far back as the 3rd millennium B.C. The most interesting thing here are the rock drawings in the cave's left branch, some 200 m from the entrance. Though opinions differ, the most recent archaeological finds date them back to the

beginning of the Bronze Age (2,700 B.C.).

Returning to the main road, continue towards Vidin (58,000), situated on the Danube. This is one of Bulgaria's oldest towns. The Celts built a settlement here called Douponia in the 3rd century B.C. On its ruins the Romans built the Bonnonia fortress. During the Middle Ages the town was known as Bdin. In 1371 Ivan Sratsimir, son of Tsar Ivan Alexander, declared himself an independent ruler of the Vidin Kingdom. Bdin of the Middle Ages was an important trading centre — to its port came goods from Wallachia, Hungary and Dubrovnik. Scripts from those times have come down to us — a gospel kept in the British Museum in London, and the Bdin Collection — in the library of Ghent, Belgium. Many uprisings began here in the 19th century, the most important of which was the great peasant uprising of 1850. Vidin was liberated from Ottoman domination by troops of the west Romanian

corps on February 24, 1878. Today the town is a major administrative, industrial and cultural centre. The town is the cultural centre of North-West Bulgaria, with a drama theatre, philharmonic orchestra, art gallery, history museum, library club

founded as early as 1870, cinemas, etc.

The town's major historical monument is Baba Vida Fortress situated on the Danube. Built by Romans in the 3rd-4th century, it was restored and expanded in the Middle Ages. In the 13th-14th centuries Bdin was the strongest fortress in North-west Bulgaria and continued to play an important part during Ottoman domination when it was restored and forti-



fied. Now the fortress contains a museum. Every two years the summer theatre plays host to drama festivals of historical

plays.

Other points of interest are the mosque and library; The Cross Barracks, late 18th century, houses The History Museum. The Church of St Panteleimon built in the first half of the 17th century; the Church of St Petka; Hadji Angelov House—a two-storey building with two bay-windows typical of the National Revival Period.

There are several other memorials in the town commemo-

rating battles fought over the last 100 years.

The town has a modern hotel — Rovno, 4 T.Petrov Str., two-star, with 6 suites, 8 single and 132 double rooms, restaurant, day bar, cafe, duty free shop, rent-a-car service (tel.: 2-44-02 and 2-62-95). The Bononia Hotel is a five-storeyed, two-star hotel with one suite, 3 single and 48 double rooms, restaurant, bar, cafe and information office.

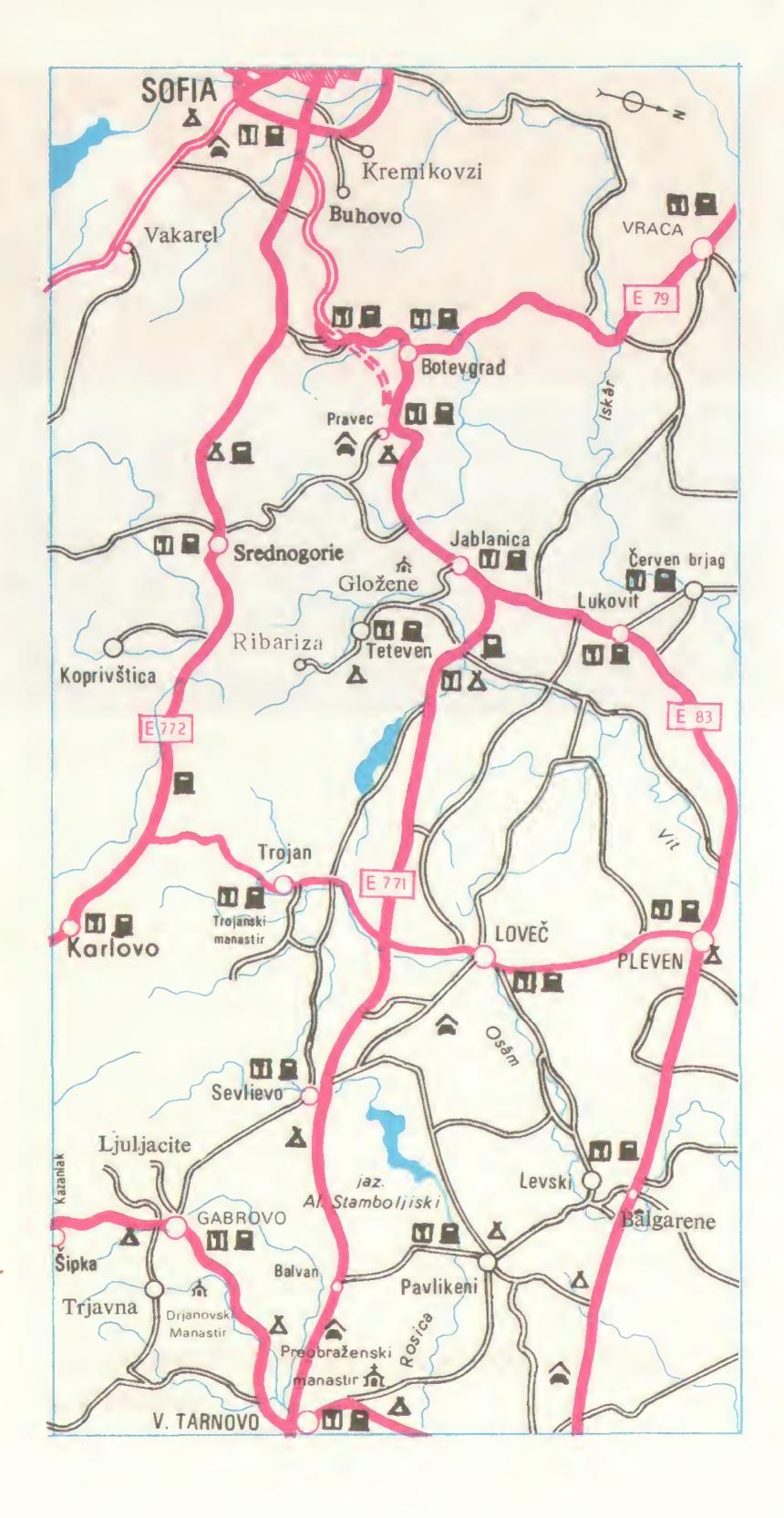


32 km southwest of Vidin is Bulgaria's westernmost town, Koula (pop. 6,000). The Vrushka Chouka border check point on the Bulgarian-Yugoslav border is only 13 km away. In Roman times there was a settlement, called Castra Martis which was an important fortress on the road from Ratiaria to Naisus. Ruins from this fortress are preserved in the town centre.



The Baba Vida Fortress

SOFIA – LOVECH – VELIKO TURNOVO – GABROVO



4. SOFIA – LOVECH – VELIKO TURNOVO – GABROVO (260 KM)

Northeast of Sofia the road passes through the village of Yordankino near which Yordanka Nikolova, fighting against fascism, died a hero's death; she is commemorated by a modest monument.

Between the villages of Potop and Chourek, on the right, is the monument to partisans from the Chavdar brigade which operated in the region during the 2nd World War. The chalet opposite the monument has a small museum.

44 km from Sofia is the highest point of the picturesque Vitinya Pass. Here there is a restaurant, a food store and a pe-

trol station.

Descending we reach *Botevgrad* (pop. 19,000), an important industrial and transport centre and the centre of Bulgarian industrial electronics. A beautiful clock tower (1866) stands in the town's square. Hotels in the town include the Botevgrad hotel, 3 stars, seven floors with 6 suites and 232 beds, a restaurant, day bar, night club, cafe, duty free shop, rooftop restaurant, post office; the Sinyo Nebe hotel (tel. 27-90) accommodates the 'Rest and Recreation' office.

On the E-83 motorway, 8 km from Botevgrad and 71 km from Sofia is the huge Pravets tourist compound, with a motel accommodating 60, a camping site situated round a pond, with 57 beds in bungalows, a hotel accommodating 104, restaurant, Shatra entertainment area, petrol station and car-repair shop.

The road leads on to Yablanitsa (3,500), an important transport centre. A detour to the right leads to Glozhene monastery, perched on the inaccessible rocks of peak Lisets. Not far from it is the Gradeshnitsa cave with underground lakes and chambers. Further on are the resorts Teteven (pop. 14,000), in one of the most beautiful spots of the Balkan Range, and Ribaritsa which is 12 km southeast of Teteven between the Rivers Ribaritsa and Beli Vit.

In Teteven is a Balkantourist hotel, Teteven, accommodating 115, with restaurant, night club, cafe, information office (tel.: 22.46). Some 7 km away, south of the village of Malka Brestnitsa, is one of the most picturesque caves in Bulgaria—the Sueva Doupka cave. It is 205-metre-long and has 5 halls of different sizes. Further east along E-771 there is a deviation which leads to the picturesque—town of Troyan (pop. 24,000) situated along the Beli Ossum river at Troyan Pass. Ruins from the Roman Trajan road are preserved here. The only building of the old town which existed prior to the liberation from the Turks is the police station, which survived the 1877 fire caused by the Turks. Now it houses the history museum. The town has a museum of arts and crafts and applied arts, the only one



The Troyan Monastery

of its kind in Bulgaria. The town is a climatic mountain resort. The Troyan hotel, 2 stars, 2 floors, has 4 suites and 122 beds, restaurant, day bar, cafe, an information office (tel.: 42-23 and 23-96).

The resort Oreshak (pop. 2,600) is 5 km east of the town, in the valley of the River Cherni Ossum. It is a well-known art centre for applied arts and has a national exhibition of arts and

crafts.

10 km from Troyan, on the left bank of the Cherni Ossum is Troyan Monastery — Bulgaria's third largest monastery, founded in 1600 with icons by Zahari Zograph. The encarved wood iconostasis was made by Tryavna carvers. During Ottoman domination the monastery was the cradle of Bulgarian

nationalism and spirit. There are 200 beds for guests.

We retrace our steps, cross E-771 and continue northwards reaching the town of Lovech — (pop. 47,000), built on both banks of the River Ossum. Settlements existed here in pre-historic, Thracian and Roman times. The Romans built the strong Melta fortress which the Bulgarian rulers Assen and Peter used in 1187. The headquarters of the Internal Revolutionary Committee in the struggle against Ottoman domination was



Murals in the Troyan Monastery

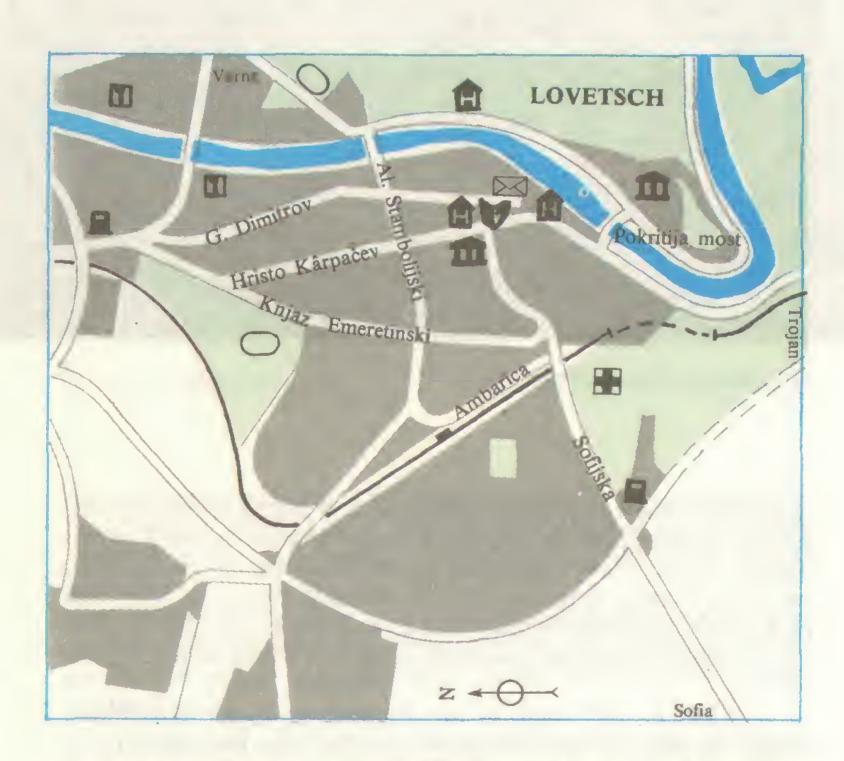
here. Now the town is an industrial and vine-growing centre. Tourist attractions are the old covered bridge on the Ossum, built in 1871-1874, the Vassil Levski Museum of National-Liberation, Vassil Levski monument, Stratesh Hill park, the ruins of Lovech fortress. Hotels: Hissarya, 2 stars, tel.: 38-21, Balkan, Stratesh, Moskva. Car-repair shop — 4 Byalo More St., tel. 44-24.

35 km to the north is the big economic, administrative, transport and cultural-historical centre of the Danubian Plain — the city of *Pleven* (pop. 123,000), situated on the Touchenitsa river. The city was founded in the 4th-3rd century B.C. when primitive settlements appeared in the Kailuka locality. Later, in the 1st millennia the Thracians settled here, followed by the Romans in the 1st century, who built the Storgozia fortress. During the Middle Ages invaders repeatedly destroyed the town and the fortress, which were later restored.

During Ottoman domination and particularly during the National Revival period, the town was active in the struggles of the Bulgarian people. In 1840 the first secular girl's school was opened, and in 1869 Vassil Levski founded the first local revolutionary committee. The Church of St Nicholas, built in

1834 is a remarkable monument to the architecture of the National Revival, directly linked with the struggle for independence of the church. Pleven became particularly prominent during the Russo-Turkish War of Liberation of 1877-1878 which terminated Ottoman bondage. Russian and Romanian troops besieged the town over more than five months and liberated it on December 10,1877. They captured the entire Turkish army and its commander Osman Pasha.

Under the monarchy the town was the centre of revolutionary movement. During the Second World War (1941-1944) the town had five detachments comprising over 550 partisans.



Pleven today is a large-scale industrial centre and has 6 research institutes, a large district library, school, technical colleges, secondary music school, college, theatre, symphony orchestra and an opera. The traditional Katya Popova Laureate Days are held in Pleven every year.

Sights in the city and its surroundings

Over 100 monuments were built by the Bulgarian people for the Russian soldiers who liberated Bulgaria. Most prominent being the Mausoleum of the Russian and Romanian Troops, in the main square, 9th September Square; Pleven Li-



beration Museum (1877) situated in a picturesque park, was opened in 1907 in the same house where Osman Pasha delivered up his sword to the Russian Emperor Alexander II. Other monuments include the Totleben Rampart, in Kailuka park, separating the waters of two dams. The walls of small dam is on the remains of a dam built by General Totleben in 1877, meant to put the mills on the Touchenitsa river out of action and cause difficulties for the Turkish army besieged in Pleven. One of the original guns has been placed on the ramparts with a bronze figure of General Totleben beside it. The Skobelev park Museum is a large park where in 1877 a detachment led by General Skobelev waged heroic battles.

There are ruins of an ancient Roman Fortress, Storgozia

(1-6th century) in the Kailuka locality.

The District History Museum is in the old barracks built in 1884-1888 by an Italian architect and since restored. The museum exhibits are mainly arranged chronologically — antiquity, National Revival, Russo-Turkish War of Liberation 1877-1878, history of capitalism, workers' revolutionary movement and socialist construction.

There are also various other museums in Pleven to be seen. Hotels: Pleven, 2 Republika Square, three stars, 12 floors, 9



suites, 333 beds (tel. 2-00-62), restaurant, day bar and night club, information bureau, rent-a-car office. Rostov na Don, 2 S.Alexiev St., two stars, 12 floors, 3 suites, 11 single and 95



Pleven. The monument to the liberators

double rooms, restaurant, bar, cafe, information office, rent-a-car office tel. (2-70-95). Kailuka, 2 stars, 3 floors, 156 beds, 6 suites, restaurant, bar, information office, rent-a-car office (phone 2-55-50).

The Kailuka camp site - 20 bungalows.

The Balkantourist bureau is on 3 Buckstone St., tel. 41-19.

Car-repair shop: 2, Industrialna St., tel. 37-61.

Union of Bulgarian Motorists: 6a Radetski St., tel. 37-93 From Pleven take the main road E-83 and continue east towards Byala (pop. 10,922). The town is mentioned in 17th century documents. In 1907 one of the first museums in the country dedicated to the Russo-Turkish War of Liberation 1877-1878 was founded here in the building which held the headquarters of the Russian Army in 1877. The Russian nurse Baroness Yulia Vreyska is buried in the museum yard. Byala's most important sight is the bridge over the River Yantra, built 1865-1867 on orders by Rousse vali Midhad Pasha. The bridge is 276 m long, 9 m wide and has 14 arches with relief figures.

52 km along the E-85 main road is the Danubian port of Rousse (pop. 178,000 situated to the east of the mouth of the Roussenski Lom river, opposite the Romanian town of Gyur-

vevo (Ghiurghiu). This is Bulgaria's fourth largest town. In Roman times a garrison was stationed here and the fortress was called Sexaginti (port of 60 ships). During the barbarian invasions in the 6th-7th centuries the fortress was destroyed and the population withdrew 26 km to the south of the Danube where the mediaeval fortress town of Cherven was built, resembling Tsarevets in Veliko Turnovo. After the Ottoman invasion it was destroyed and a new fortress called Rouschouk here was built. The town could be entered through five stone gates with iron doors - the Kyuntoukapou gate still exists. In 1864 Rouschouk became the centre of the Danubian province which included Nish, Sofia and Vidin. It had broad paved streets with curbed pavements and street lights delivered from Vienna; an old people's house, a hospital, a post office, two large western style hotels were also built which are still to be seen. The first railway line in Bulgaria, Rouschouk-Varna, was built in 1866. Rouschouk became one of the great revolutionary centres and a link between revolutionaries in Bulgaria and emigrants in Romania. Many fighters for national independence are associated with the town.

Russian liberators entered the town on February 20, 1878. In the first years following liberation, Rousse had the highest population in Bulgaria, and had more factories, banks and consulates than Sofia. Today the town is one of the largest industrial centres in the country with shipyards and oil refine-

ries.

Bulgarian river navigation is based in Rousse. Rousse port is one of the main links between Bulgarian and the Soviet Union. The Bridge of Friendship built in 1954, is extremely important for the country's economy. Some 2.8 km long, its middle part can lift up at high tide. It is one of the Bulgarian-Romanian border check points. Buildings in the town centre show its prosperity in the beginning of the century, influenced by Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest with Baroque, Renaissance and Secession characteristics. Some 120 buildings have been

and Secession characteristics. Some 120 buildings have been declared local monuments and 10 national cultural monuments. A small number of buildings from the old town have been reserved, including the Turkish bath, the naval tower and Islyahhane hotel.

The town has rich cultural traditions. The theatre is 80 years old, the State Opera was built in 1949, and the Symphony Orchestra founded in 1947. Every year the town hosts the traditional international festival 'March Days of Symphony

Music'.

Museums: the Baba Tonka District History Museum; National Museum of Transport and Communications; Natural History Museum; Art gallery.



Pleven. The Pleven Epopee diorama



Monuments: the Monument to Freedom, by Italian sculptor Arnoldo Zocchi in the city park in the town centre.

Youth Park has monuments to many important persons

from Bulgaria's history.

The Lipnik National Park is under construction between

the Danube and the road to Veliko Turnovo.

33 km from the town between the meandering of the Cherni Lom are the ruins of the mediaeval fortress of Cherven and near the village of Ivanovo are the ruins of seven churches. Best preserved is the Archangel Church, also known as the Ivanovo Monastery. It has admirable frescoes by unknown masters who are supposed to have belonged to the Turnovo school of Painting. The Ivanovo churches have been declared valuable works of art by UNESCO.

Hotels: Riga, 22 Stamboliiski St., 3 stars, 16 floors, 8 suites, 21 single and 151 double rooms; restaurant, day bar and night club, cafe, hairdresser's, free shop, post office, information bureau, covered parking lot, rent-a-car office (tel. 21-84). Dounav, 3 T.Tserkovski St., two stars, 3 floors, 6 suites and 142 beds; restaurant, day bar and night club, cafe, information bureau and rent-a-car office (tel. 2-65-18). Varsha-

va tel. 2-40-61.

Balkantourist office: 1, Raiko Daskalov Str., tel. 2-24-06. 2-52-50.

Road assistance technical service and information 10a Ra-

kovski St., tel. 2-65-59.

Back to the town of Byala along the E-85 road and southwards. Some 20 km away is the village of Koutsina. Nearby are the ruins of the Roman town of Nikopolis ad Istrum — an important administrative and military centre in Lower Moesia in the 2nd-3rd centuries. It was founded by Emperor Mark Ulpius Trajanus (98-117) in honour of his victory in 102 A.C. over the Dacis, who inhabited the lands north of the Danube. The Goths captured and destroyed the town in mid-3rd century. It was restored by the Byzantines and again devastated by the Avars in the 7th century. During the First and Second Bulgarian States there was a small settlement on the same site. During its peak in the 2nd and early 3rd century, the town was a strong fortress guarding the military and commercial roads from the Danube to Constantinople and from the Black Sea to Sofia. The town was protected by a solid fortress wall with towers. The streets led to the central square (forum), around it was a covered theatre seating 350 — the only one of its kind in the Balkans. The City Council was to the north. The best preserved building is the brick reservoir west of the town walls which supplied the town's drinking water. Columns, capitals, sacrificial altars, pedestals, pediments, ornaments and decorations were found here, as well as a bust of Emperor Gordian III (238-244) and a statue of Eros.



Pleven. The Kailuka park

Some ten kilometres to the left a road leads to Gorna Oryahovitsa (pop. 39,000) — the largest railway junction of North Bulgaria. It was a craft and trade centre during Ottoman rule. After the Liberation it developed as a railway station following the construction of the Varna-Sofia line. Hotels: Rahovets, two stars, 5 floors, 3 suites and 146 beds, restaurant, night club, national tavern, cafe (tel. 4-16-30).

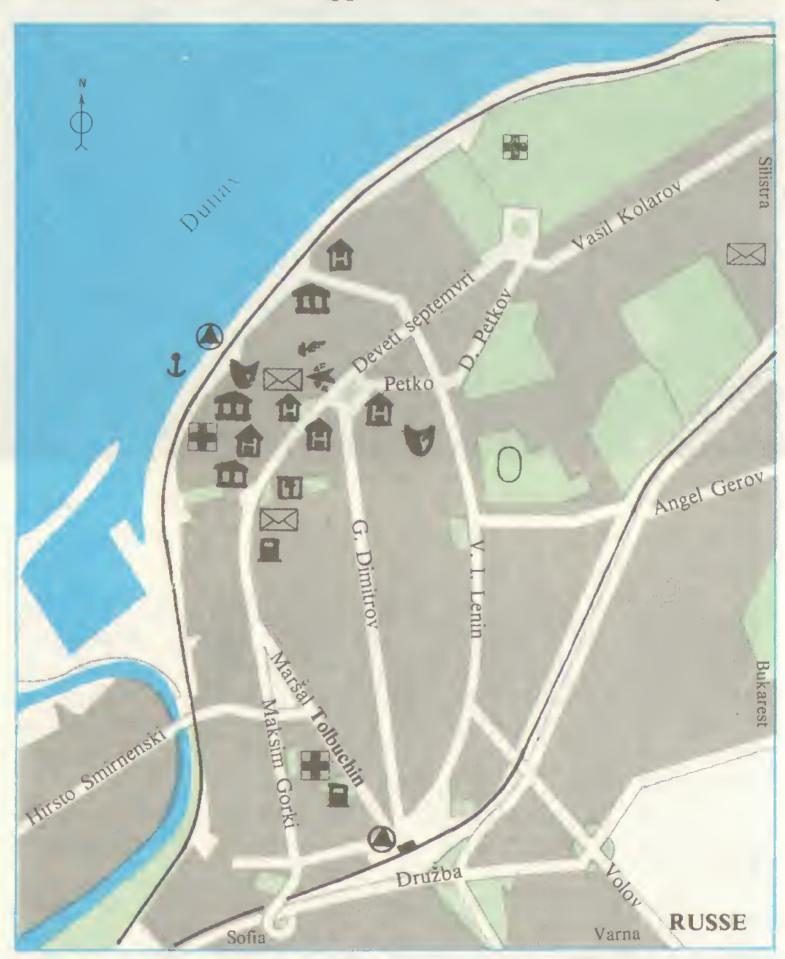
Return to E-85 and enter the picturesque Derventa Gorge, where, facing each other on the rocks, are the Transfiguration

Monastery and the Holy Trinity Monastery.

The Transfiguration Monastery is 6 km north of Veliko Turnovo. The ruins of the old mediaeval monastery are some half a kilometre in the woods, south of the present-day monastery. It was probably founded during the reign of Ivan Shishman, in the 1570s. It fell into oblivion for several centuries, after repeated plundering. The frescoes were painted by Zahari Zograph of the Samokov school of painting. He painted the whole church and icons from 1849 to 1851. Interesting from an ethnographic point of view is the Doomsday fresco painted on the eastern side of the vestibule. Also remarkable is the Wheel of Life fresco on the outside southern altar wall, showing human life from a philosophical point of view.

In 1838 the Tryavna master-engravers made a magnificent iconostasis which is one of the masterpieces of the Tryavna school of wood-carving. They also made the iconostasis in the small Anunciation Church. The large monastery library holds valuable incunabula, historical documents, etc.

The Holy Trinity Monastery is situated among rocks opposite the Transfiguration Monastery, on the steep banks of the River Yantra. It is supposed to have been founded by Pa-



triarch Euthimius. Several prominent literary figures worked there.

Veliko Turnovo (pop. 63,500) is one of Bulgaria's most beautiful towns. It was capital of the Second Bulgarian State from 1187 to 1396. There was a Byzantine fortress on the Tsarevets hill in the 5th-6th century, built by Justinian, which was captured by the Slavs in the 7th century. In 1185 Turnovo was the centre of a nationwide uprising led by the brothers Assen and Peter. The uprising was successful, Peter was declar-



ed Tsar and Turnovo capital of the new Bulgarian state, which lasted for two centuries until Bulgaria fell under Ottoman domination. The town maintained lively commercial links with Dubrovnik, Genoa and Venice. It became one of the largest literary centres of its time. Magnificent works were written here, some of which are still presented - Manasses' Chronicle (in the Vatican library) and Tsar Ivan Alexander's Tetraevangelia (in British Museum, London). In 1350 Theodosius of Turnovo founded Kilifarevo Monastery near Turnovo which was a literary school. Students from all over the country, from Russia, Wallachia and Serbia, studied here; Patriarch Euthimius was among them. He founded a second literary school in the Holy Trinity Monastery, known as the Turnovo School. His disciples, Grigorii Tsamblak and Konstantin Kostenechki, continued their teachings in Wallachia, Serbia and Russia. On July 17, 1393, after a three-month siege, Turnovgrad fell under Ottoman domination. The capital was burnt, destroyed and plundered, but the spirit of people remained alive and many uprisings broke out in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. In the 19th century the town was a major craft centre. A Bulgarian men's school was opened followed by a girl's school in 1845. In 1835 the town was the centre of an uprising, known as the

Rousse. The Pantheon of the National Revival





Rousse. The Bridge of Friendship

Velcho conspiracy. In 1870 Vassil Levski founded the Turnovo revolutionary committee. During the Uprising of April 1876 Turnovo was the centre of the First Revolutionary District. Troops led by General I.V.Gurko liberated the town on June 25, 1877.

Nowadays Veliko Turnovo is one of Bulgaria's university towns with many secondary and special schools, a theatre, an art gallery and museums.

Major historical monuments and tourist sites

Tsarevets — a fortified hill, towering over the Yantra fortress wall, the defence towers, Patriarch's residence and Assension Church and palace.

District History Museum is the country's second largest. Displayed here are many monuments of Thracian, Roman, Byzantine, Slavonic and Bulgarian cultures.

Holy Martyrs Church (1230) with its famous stone columns with inscriptions by Khan Omourtag and Tsar Ivan As-

sen III.

Church of St Dimiter is at the foot of the Trapezitsa hill. It was in this church that Peter and Assen declared the 1185 Uprising against Byzantine domination.



Rousse. Riga hotel

Church of Saints Peter and Paul, built and painted in the 14th century.

The National Revival Museum in the Nikoli Inn.

Old Gurko Street is a typical Turnovo street. Most of the houses here were built during Ottoman rule. Of particular interest are Granny Mata's house and Sarafka's house.

Monuments: Velcho Conspiracy monument, erected in 1935 to commemorate the centenary of the uprising; Vassil Levski monument; to those who died in the wars of 1885,

1912-1913 and 1915-1918.

Hotels: Veliko Turnovo, 2 Emil Popov St., 195 rooms, restaurant, day bar and night club, cafe, free shop, hairdresser's, indoor swimming pool, rent-a-car bureau. Tel. 3-05-71. Etur, 4 Ivailo St., 7 floors, two stars, 12 suites, 128 beds; restaurant, night club, hairdresser's, rent-a-car and information office. Tel. 2-68-51, Yantra, 1 Velchova Zavera St., two stars, 4 floors, 2 suites and 105 beds, restaurant, night club, cafe, information and rent-a-car office. Tel. 2-03-91.

Sveta Gora motel, 2 stars. Camping sites: Bolyarski Stan,

2 stars, Preobrazhenski Monastir, 1 star.

Balkantourist office: 1 Levski St., tel. 2-02-36.



Union of Bulgarian Motorists — 6 Tolbukhin St. Tel.: 2-14-69.

Some 50 km from Veliko Turnovo along E-85 is the picturesque town of Gabrovo. On the way is *Dryanovo* (pop. 11,000), situated on the banks of River Dryanovo. In the Middle Ages there was a Bulgarian fortress built on the plateau over the Dryanovo Monastery. In the Tryavna Pass in 1190 Peter and Assen defeated troops of the Byzantine Emperor Isaak Angel II and laid the foundations of the Second Bulgarian State. The ruins of the Roman Diskoduraterra fortress are 7-8 km to the northeast. The town was most prosperous during the National Revival. It is the birth place of the great Bulgarian builder and architect, Master Kolyu Ficheto.



Tourist sights: The Kolyu Ficheto Museum — an original house built in traditional Bulgarian national style. Church of St Nikola was built by Kolyu Ficheto in 1851. The Lafchiev house 1840, is a masterpiece of National Revival architecture.



A miniature of Tsar Ivan Alexander's Tetraevangelia

There is a tourist hostel accommodating 40 and the Milkana hotel – 2 Bacho Kiro St., two stars, 4 floors, 140 beds, tel. 22-61.

Some 4 km south of Dryanovo in the bosom of the mountains, is the *Dryanovo Monastery*, founded during the Second Bulgarian State. During the Uprising of April 1876, 200 insurgents, led by the teacher Bacho Kiro and Priest Hariton resisted the 10,000 strong Ottoman army. Their remains are kept in a mausoleum. The two churches St Archangel Michael (1845) and the Assumption are also interesting tourist attractions.

500 metres from the Monastery is Bacho Kiro cave where remains from the Paleolithic Age have been discovered. The cave is well-appointed with electricity and open to visitors.

Near the monastery is a Balkantourist hotel, 2 stars tel. 24-71, accommodating 50, restaurant, national taverna. Near the cave is a tourist chalet, accommodating 100.

A broad branches off south of Dryanovo, leading to the old Bulgarian town of *Tryavna* (pop. 14,000), located amidst picturesque surroundings. During the National Revival the town was a craft and trade centre. Tryavna is situated 432 m

above sea level and its climate is moderate continental.



Veliko Turnovo. The Tsarevets hill

The Daskalov Museum, with carved wooden ceilings. The Museum of Woodcarving and Icon-painting, with models of the famous Tryavna art school, is also in the building.

The square with its clock tower built in 1814 and bridge

are the landmarks of the town.

Slaveikov Museum where the prominent Bulgarian writer and politician Petko Rachov Slaveikov lived from 1853-1879, is also worth a visit. His son, poet Pencho Slaveikov, was born here.

Pencho Raikov Museum, typical Tryavna architecture from the National Revival Period.

Angel Kunchev Museum

Church of St. Archangel Michael is one of the three churches built late in the 12th century by Assen and Peter to mark their victory in the Tryavna woods in 1190 over Emperor Isaak Angel. The church was extended in 1819 and in 1820-1821. It was decorated with wood-carvings. The bishop's throne in the church is a masterpiece of engraving. A wooden cross with carved Biblical scenes is in the church.

Church of St Georgi, built in 1842-1852. Its iconostasis is

of carved wood.

The town has a hotel - Ralitsa, 2 stars, tel. 22-19 and a

comfortable tourist hostel.

8 km before reaching Gabrovo, left of E-85, there is a detour leading to the museum village of *Bozhentsi*, nestling in the Balkan Range. Legend has it that in 1393, when the Ottoman hordes captured the capital of the Second Bulgarian State, Turnovgrad, the population took refuge in the mountains. Among the refuges was the noblewoman Bozhena and her nine sons, and the village was named after her. Bozhentsi's prosperity started in the second half of the 18th century, when art and crafts industries developed such as smithies, weaving and pottery. Its enterprising tradesmen travelled to Romania, Austro-Hungary and Russia. Its prosperous population built two-storey houses with heavy stone roofs, wide wooden verandahs and carved wooden gates.

The village was proclaimed an architectural and historical reserve. The Unions of Architects, Writers and Artists all have

buildings here.

We now head for one of Bulgaria's prettiest towns, Gabrovo (pop. 80,000), situated in the mountains in the narrow valley of the Yantra. The town was founded in the 14th century. Legend says that after Bozhena founded the village of Bozhentsi, her son Racho settled on the banks of the Yantra and built himself a smity near an ancient tree, and later the town was named after that tree. During Ottoman rule many crafts developed such as homespun and furriery, Gabrovo was famous in the Ottoman Empire for craft. The town flourished in the 19th century, with the innovation of the water wheel from Transylvannia. Woollen braid, homespun articles, rugs, wood and iron articles were manufactured which found a market beyond the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. The economic rise boosted the town's cultural development and a monastery school was founded in 1825, and in 1835 the first new Bulgarian secular school was set up with the assistance of merchants from Gabrovo, who lived in Odessa. The citizens of Gabrovo took an active part in the rebellions and uprisings of the 19th century as well as in the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) defending Mount Shipka. The Gabrovo population were most active in the war against fascism and capitalism. Partisans from the Gabrovo-Sevlievo detachment fought fierce battles against the police and gendarmerie on Mount Bouzloudja and near the village of Balvan.

After the socialist victory, Gabrovo developed by leaps and bounds. Old industrial enterprises were modernised and

new branches established.

The town has a theatre, children's art school, district museum, library, art gallery, summer theatre, theatre of Humour and Satire — a festival of humour and satire is held here bi-an-



Veliko Turnovo. The Nikoli Inn, a National Revival Museum at present

nually in May. An international biennial of cartoons is also held attended by guests from Aberdeen and many other countries.

A technological institute was opened in 1964, in addition to pedagogical institute, technical colleges and secondary schools.

Monuments and sights:

The District History Museum, 7 Balvan St.

The Aprilov Grammar School, founded 1872 where many prominent Bulgarians studied.

The clock tower in May 1st Square, built in 1835.

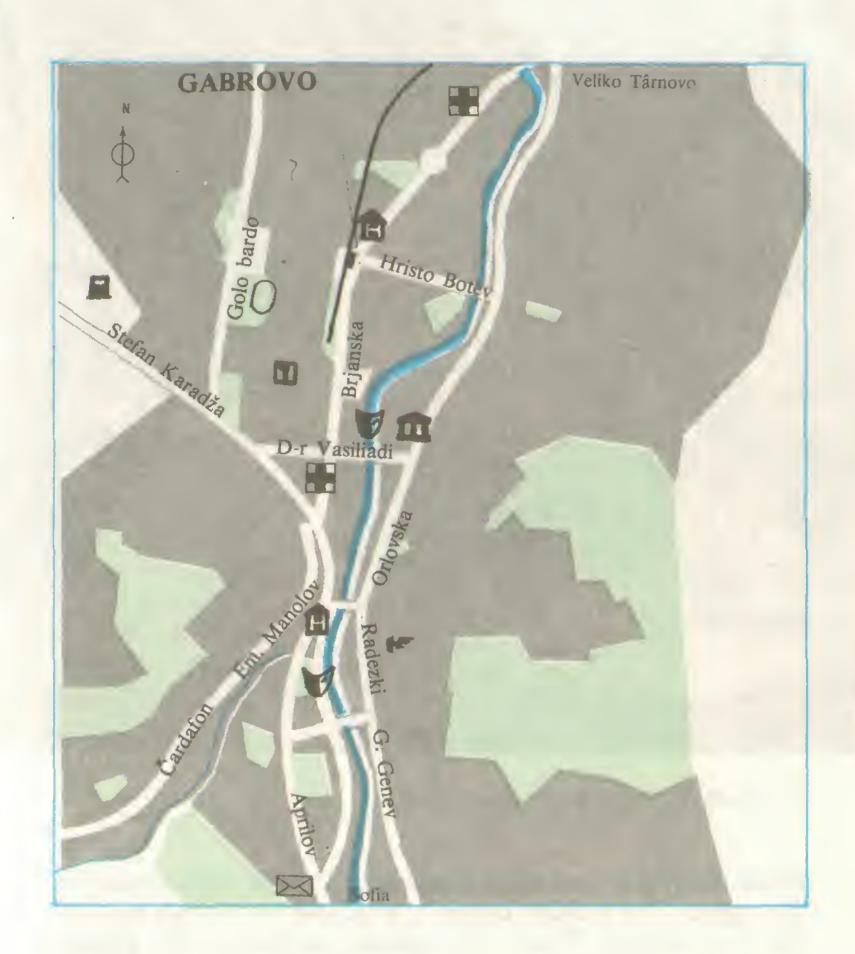
A group of houses from National Revival times in Opulchenska St.

Church of Virgin Mary, with its remarkable iconostasis. In front of the Aprilov Grammar school is the Vassil Aprilov Monument built in 1935 to mark the centenary of the opening of the first Bulgarian secular school.

The monument to Racho the Blacksmith stands on a rock

in the middle of the Yantra.

The Ossuary in the new part of the town is a compound of sculptural figures, a sacrificial altar, a rostrum and memorial plaques with the names of fallen partisans from 1923-1944.



Mitko Palaouzov Monument built near the school where

the young partisan studied.

Hotels: Balkan, 14 Emanouil Manolov St., tel. 2-19-11, two stars, accommodating 415, restaurant, three banqueting halls, coffee shop, day bar.

Yantra, Railway Station Square, tel.: 2-48-12 and 2-53-72,

two stars, 320 beds, restaurant.

Bouzloudja, Palaouzovo quarter, accommodating 160.

The Inn, 15 Opulchenska St., national taverna.

The Mogilyov compound, May 1st square, restaurant 90, national taverna, 1 Aprilovska Street.

A Rest and Tourism bureau - 2 Opulchenska St.

An open-air museum is 8 km south of Gabrovo, bearing the old name of the river Yantra — Etura. It is an architectural-ethnographic compound, with several workshops which are now an ethnographic rarity. 26 crafts which flourished in Gabrovo during the National Revival are exhibited, and many are originals. There is a two-storeyed Bulgarian house from the Na-



The Etura open-air ethnographic museum

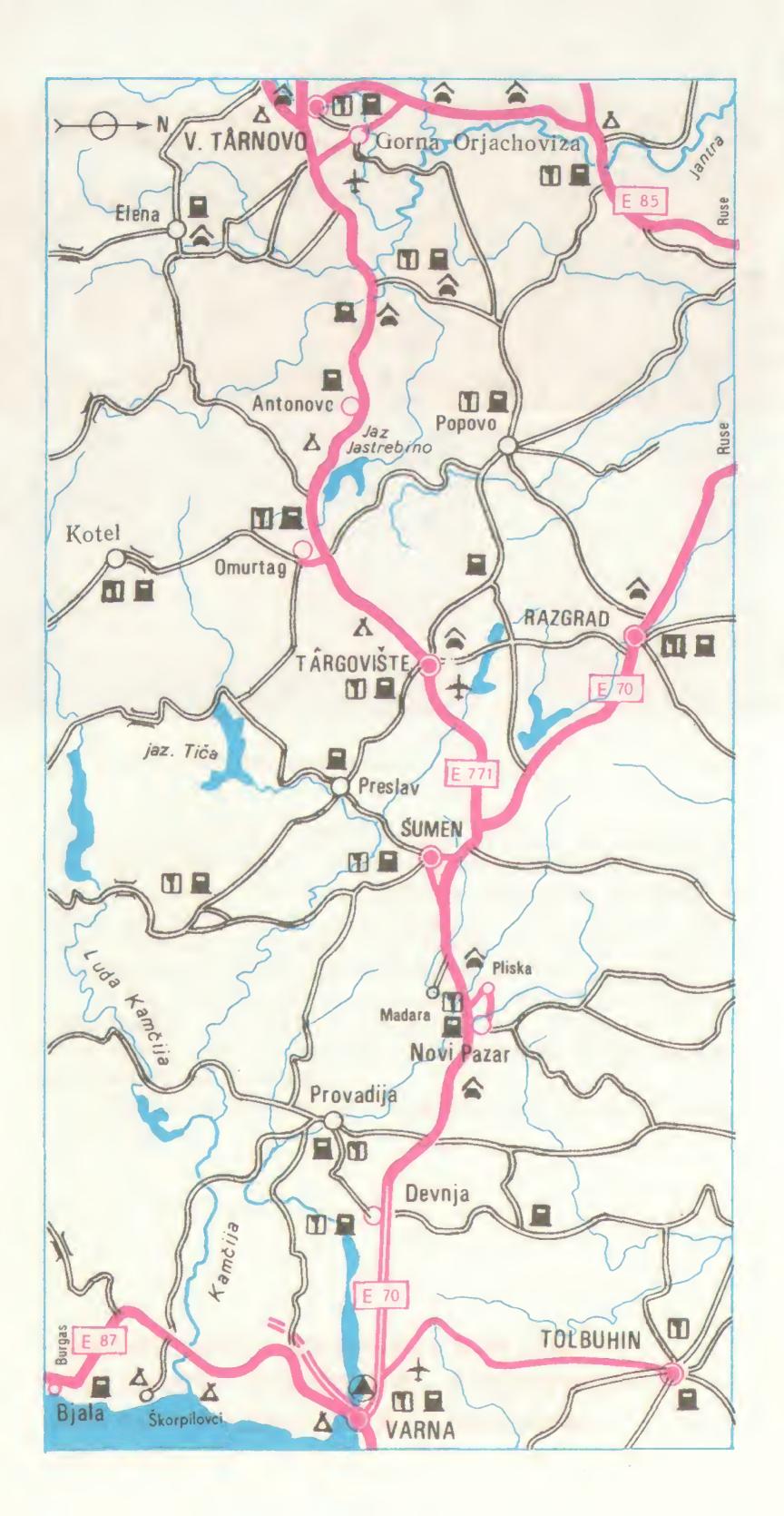
tional Revival Period built in the architectural style typical of the region. The interior design is executed in the folk style of the last century. There is a national taverna on the ground floor. On the right bank of the Sivak River (Yantra's left tributary) there is a workshop for making knives, the mill, a woodturning lathe for plates and small bowls, a tower, a saw mill.

4 km from the Etura perched on a rock is the Gabrovo (also known as Sokol) monastery. It was founded in 1833. The church with its frescoes (1834) is of particular interest

and also the old fountain.

There is a hotel nearby accommodating 50, and a hotel-restaurant.

VELIKO TURNOVO – OMOURTAG – TURGOVISHTE – SHOUMEN – PRESLAV – MADARA – NOVI PAZAR – VARNA



5. VELIKO TURNOVO — OMOURTAG — TURGOVISHTE — SHOUMEN — PRESLAV — MADARA — NOVI PAZAR — VARNA (240 km)

From Veliko Turnovo to the Black Sea coast at Varna, passing through Antonovo (pop. 2,000) — which was important centre during 1943-1944, when the Omourtag partisan detachment operated in this area. Late in 1943 the fascists sent troops, police units and gendarmerie who terrorised the population. 25 km east, along E-771 is Omourtag (pop. 10,200), founded in the 16th century, the town is now an industrial and agricultural centre.

Our next stop is *Turgovishte* (pop. 46,000), on the river Vrana. This town was founded during Ottoman rule. In those times it was known as a large fair centre called Eski Djoumaya.

Southeast of the town is a large park with pond and restaurant. A museum has been set up in the old secondary school; the poet and public figure Petko Slaveikov taught here.



Hotels: Miziya, 1 star, 3 storeys, 140 beds, restaurant, night club and coffee shop. Tel. 25-33. Balkan and Moskva — Gladston St. Balkantourist Office — tel. 25-33.

Bulgarian Motorists' Union — 1 Kiril and Metodii St., tel.

40-14; car repair shop — tel. 46-03.



Turgovishte. The central square

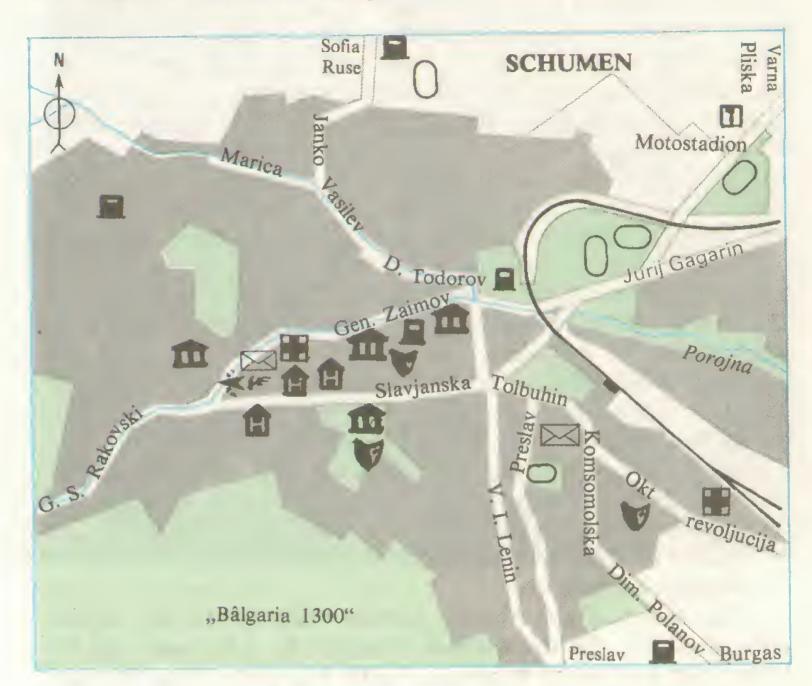
From Turgovishte take the road for Shoumen (pop. 94,500) - large administrative, industrial and cultural centre. The Romans built a strong fortress here on the ruins of a fortified Thracian settlement. In the 6th-7th century it was captured by the Slavs. During the First Bulgarian State the fortress was part of the fortified quadrangle Pliska-Madara-Shoumen fortress - Khan Omourtag's settlement on the River Ticha. It was also an important point during the Second Bulgarian State. In 1388 the town yielded to Ottoman invaders and in 1444 was seized by the troops of Wladyslaw III Yagelo (Varnenchik). After his defeat at Varna, the Ottomans retrieved the fortress abandoning it later because it was heavily damaged. In the 18th and 19th centuries German, French and Belgian engineers helped turn Shoumen once more into a strong fortress, this time it formed part of the fortified quadrangle Rousse-Silistra-Shoumen-Varna.

During the National Revival, Shoumen was a centre for Bulgarian national culture, influenced by Austro-Hungary. One of these emigrants was Lajos Kossuth who became a leader of the revolution. The first Bulgarian orchestra was founded in 1851, and the Bulgarian national theatre was founded in 1856.

Today Shoumen is one of the country's biggest industrial centres.

Tourist sights:

District History Museum, 10 d. Blagoev St. The exhibition is arranged in several buildings.



Tombul Mosque — the largest in the country, preserved from Ottoman times, built with material from the old Bulgarian capitals of Pliska and Veliki Preslav, Madara and the Shoumen fortress. The courtyard of the mosque housed a Turkish primary school, a theological school and a library. There is an ethnographic exhibition in the school.

1,300 Years of Bulgaria Memorial — stands on Ilchov Bair

hill.

Vassil Kolarov Museum, 11 T. Ikonomov St.

Lajos Kossuth Museum, where he lived in 1849-1850. The Common Grave with a monument to those who fell against capitalism and fascism.

Hotels: Madara — 3 stars, 7 floors, accommodating 140, restaurant, coffee shop, national taverna, information and rent-a-car offices. Tel. 5-75-98.

Sofia – 37 Tsar Osvoboditel St.

Balkantourist office, hotel Madara, tel. 5-75-98 Car-repair shop, 14 Gagarin St., tel. 5-20-84 Shoumen-Razgrad (49 km)

A short detour northwest leads to Razgrad (pop. 55,000). There was once a Thracian settlement here which the Romans made into a fortress called Abritus. During Ottoman domination the town was a major crafts, trade and administrative centre. A monastic school was opened here in the 17th century, followed by a class school in 1812 and a girl's school in 1848. The library club was founded in 1869. The town was liberated from Ottoman domination in 1878 by Russian troops, under Prince Dondukov-Korsakov.

The town then developed as the centre of a rich agricultural region, with craft and trade but poorly developed industry. Under socialism, Razgrad has quickly become an industrial, administrative and cultural centre with the glass and por-

celain works being one of the largest in Europe.

The town has a theatre, district history museum, and va-

rious specialised schools.

Hotels: Razgrad, 3 stars, 20 floors, 16 suites, 21 single and 104 double rooms, restaurant, night club, coffee-shop, hairdresser's, post office, information bureau.

Abritus, accommodating 140, 33 Beli Lom Blvd., tel.

27-06, Republika Restaurant.

Balkantourist bureau, 29 Lenin Blvd., Tel.: 26-37 Union of Bulgarian Motorists, 3 Nozharska St.

Tourist attractions:

The ruins of the Roman fortress town of Abritus, discovered in 1953, the town was surrounded by a fortress wall 12-15 m high and up to 3 m wide, with four gates. Near the eastern gate there is a 3rd-century building with 23 rooms which was probably the house of a rich landowner.

The town was captured by the Goths in 251 and in the 6th century it was destroyed by the invading Avars and Slavs.

Tourist attractions:

Ibrahim Pasha Mosque, 1614;

The clock tower, 1864;

Kovanluka Park, some 8 km southwest of the town with ponds, sports grounds, a hotel-restaurant and a national taverna 'Kolibite'.

During excavations in 1982, under a mound near the village of Sveshtari, some 6 km northwest of Isperih in the Razgrad district, archaeologists discovered a 3rd century B.C. Thracian tomb. In ancient times this part of Bulgaria was inhabited by the Thracian tribe of the Getae. The tomb has a corridor leading to it and its walls, like the tomb itself, are made of large, well-cut slabs. The entrance is lined with rectangular columns with capitals decorated in red and blue rosetts. Above the columns is a frieze decorated with rosettes and garlands. The tomb proper consists of three chambers



Ruins of the Roman town of Abritus

united by a semi-cylindrical vault. The central chamber is decorated with a frieze depicting three female figures in high relief, dressed in long sleeveless robes tied with belts. Their hands are raised as if to support the frieze and they are in the style of the Cariatides in Athens. Another scene is of a goddess offering a wreath to a horseman. This is in black and white and is unique. There are two stone beds in the chamber, probably intended for a Thracian ruler and his wife. The tomb had already been plundered hundreds of years ago — there are traces of extensive damage in the three rooms: broken door slabs, architectural details, human and animal bones. Investigations continue.

19 km south of Shoumen is *Preslav* (pop. 14,000) and a further 2 km south are the ruins of *Veliki Preslav*. During the reign of Tsar Simeon (893-927) the town was for a short time an important cultural and trade centre. It fell under Byzantine domination from 971-976 and from 1001-1187. In 1388 it was seized by Ottoman invaders and destroyed. It was rebuilt in the 16th-19th century north of the ruins and was called Eski Stamboul (the old capital). So far some 2,000 metres of fortress walls have been discovered.

Most of the remains have been uncovered including north and south gates, towers, palace compound, monasteries, workshops as well as two monasteries, several churches, cottages and other buildings from the 9th-10th century. In 1978 near the ruins of the palace compound, gold treasure was discovered comprising a necklace, rings, etc., the work of local masters.

There is a history museum at the archaeological site, displaying the 9th-century ceramic icon of St Theodore Stratilatus.

Ten kilometres east of Shoumen, near the village of Mutnitsa is the Madara National Historical and Archaeological Reserve with its magnificent bas-relief, cut into the rock of the ancient Madara fortress of a horseman followed by a dog and a lion pierced by a spear. The inscription beneath dates from the reign of Khan Omourtag (816-831). The Madara Horseman is one of four sites in Bulgaria (the Kazanluk Thracian Tomb, Boyana Church and Ivanovo rock churches near Rousse) to be included in UNESCO's World List.

On the terrace below the relief are ruins of buildings from different eras — palaces, a Proto-Bulgarian heathen shrine (9th century), churches and monasteries from the late Middle Ages. Stairs cut into the rock lead to the Madara plateau and fortress, used until the Ottoman invasions. To the southwest, at the foot of the plateau, are remains of Roman houses and

farm buildings.

10 km along the main E-70 road is Kaspichan and 6 km from there the ruins of the first Bulgarian capital of *Pliska*. The town was founded after the establishment of the Bulgarian state. In 811 it was plundered and burnt by troops of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus I. It was restored during the reign of the Bulgarian Khan Omourtag. After *Preslav* was declared capital of Bulgaria in 893, Pliska retained its role as a major centre. In 1001 it was again seized by the Byzantines. The town fell into decay after the invasions of the Pechenegs and other tribes.

Pliska covered an area of 23 sq km and was planned with a concentric fortification system. The town had two belts of fortifications: a rampart with moat and fortress walls with monumental gates and guard towers. Between the two fortification systems were the dwellings of the common people and many churches, while the houses of the boyars, temples and palaces were in the inner town.

Some 1.5 km from the Eastern gate in the outer town are the ruins of the *Great Basilica*. A tomb was discovered here in 1978 containing gold jewellery, probably the work of local

masters.



The Madara Horseman

4 km away along E-70 is the town of *Novi Pazar* (pop. 17,000) which has glass, porcelain and glazed earthenware industries. A mediaeval necropolis was unearthed near the town.

Hanski Stan Motel, one star, petrol station.

40 km further on is the large industrial centre of *Devnya* (pop. 15,500). Here, during the reign of Emperor Trajanus (98-117) the Roman town of Martianopolis was founded near

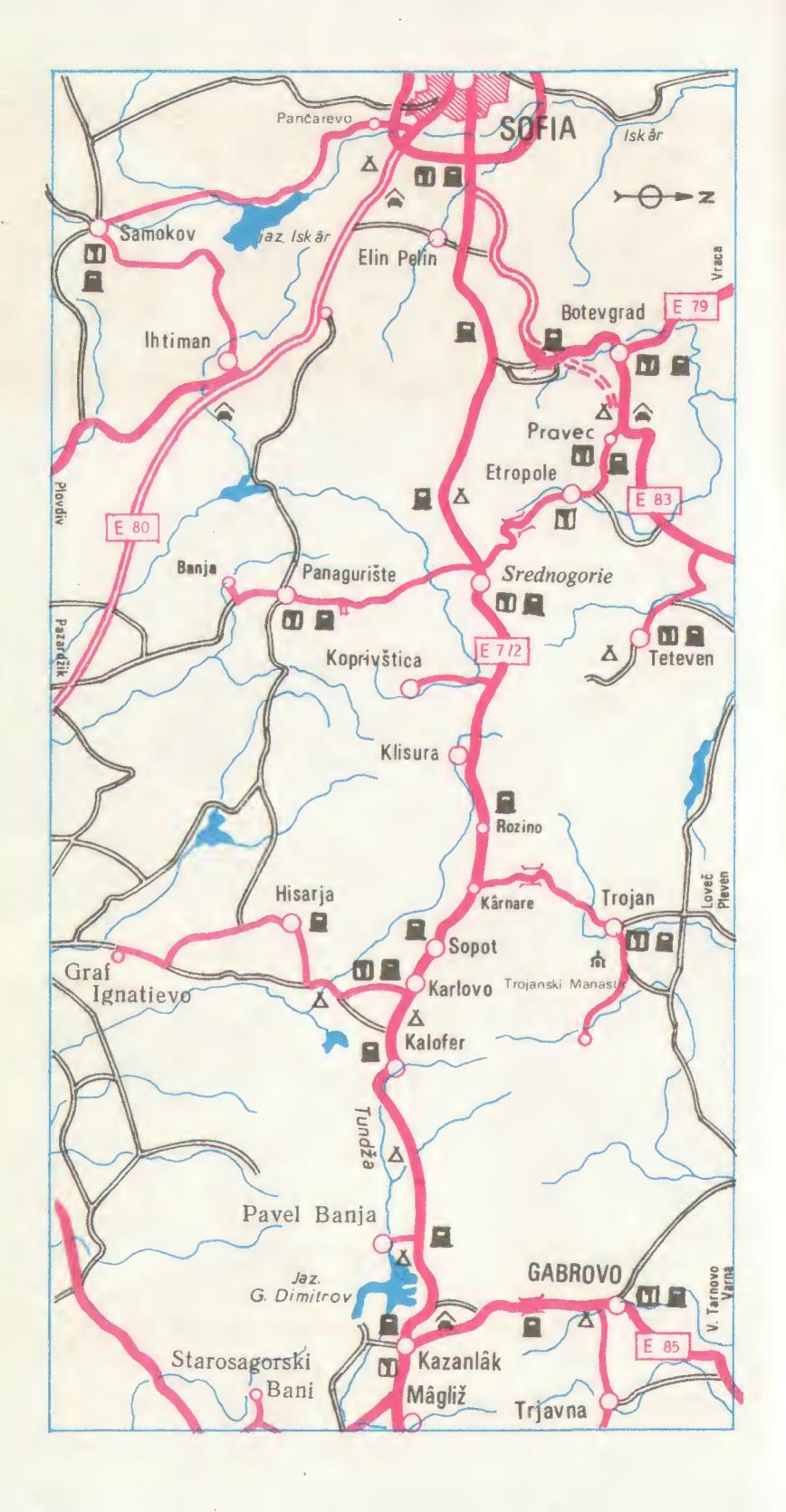
the Karst springs.

Some 18 km before Varna, is the Stone Forest — a semidesert area covered with yellow sand and groups of stone columns up to 6-7 m high. They are supposed to have been formed as a result of the action of the wind, water and sand, which eroded the softer rocks, leaving the harder ones. Recently another group of stone trees was found near the village of Beloslav.



6

SOFIA - KARLOVO - KAZANLUK - MOUNT SHIPKA - SLIVEN - BOURGAS - SLUNCHEV BRYAG



6. SOFIA – KARLOVO – KAZANLUK – MOUNT SHIPKA – SLIVEN – BOURGAS – SLUNCHEV BRYAG (440 km)

This route runs along one of Bulgaria's most modern motorways, E-772, between the Balkan Range and Sredna Gora mountain towards the sea, crossing the famous Valley of Roses. The road climbs the Sarantsi saddle and Gulubets hill and then descends into Zlatitsa-Pirdop valley to the town of Srednogorie (pop. 15,800) which was founded in 1978 by merging the towns of Zlatitsa and Pirdop and has refineries for copper, blue vitriol, rare and white metals. 20 km south is the Panagyurski kolonii resort.

Bulgaria's largest coppermine (Medet) is nearby.

16 km from Srednogorie a detour leads to Koprivshtitsa (pop. 3,600) situated on both sides of the Topolnitsa River at an altitude of 1,060 m. Every street and every house here is a monument to the heroic past of this region. It was here that the first shot was fired on 20 April 1876 to mark the outbreak of the April Uprising against the Turks. Many historical and architectural monuments from the National Revival period have been preserved. The houses of Koprivshtitsa, are particularly interesting — high spacious buildings with carved wooden decorations, solid stone walls and heavy wooden gates. The oldest architectural monument is the Pavlikenska House, early 18th century. Other buildings include craftsmen's writers' and revolutionaries' houses. Koprivshtitsa was the first town liberated by the partisans on 24 March 1944.

Hotels: Koprivshtitsa, one star, tel. 21-18; Barikadite – (18 km southwest, 3 storeys, 30 beds, restaurant, night club

and national taverna. Tel. 20-91).

The next stop along the E-772 is Klissoura (pop. 2,000) — a small mountainous town burnt down during the April 1876 Uprising. The village of Rozino follows, famous for its rose gardens and rose-distilleries. Next is Sopot (11,000), buried in greenery and steeped in the romanticism of the National Revival period. The patriarch of Bulgarian literature — Ivan Vazov (1850-1921) was born here and his birth place is now a museum of the National Revival Period. The Museum of Ivan Zagoubanski, courier for the underground Iskra newspaper published in Munich. Balkantourist hotel — Stara Planina — 2 stars, accommodating 84, restaurant. Tel.: 21-23 and 21-25.

Karlovo (pop. 26,000) is situated in the centre of the Valley of Roses and is an important transport junction. The town was well-known in Vienna and Egypt during the National Revival period, thanks to its trade with attar of roses and craftsmen's goods. The revolutionary during liberation from Ottoman domination — Vassil Levski (1837-1873) was born here

and his birth place is now a museum.





Koprivshtitsa. The monument to Georgi Benkovski

Balkantourist hotel — Rozova Dolina, accommodating 105; a restaurant. Sofia hotel, a tourist hostel. The next town in the Valley of Roses is *Kalofer* (pop. 6,000), situated on both banks of the Toundja river, 17 km from Karlovo. It was founded in the 16th century, by refugees after the Ottoman invasion. It developed rapidly probably as a crafts centre. It is the birth place of the poet-revolutionary Hristo Botev (1848-1876). Roza hotel 2 stars, 2 floors, 50 beds, a tourist hostel.

Further east, 39 km from Kalofer is *Kazanluk* (pop. 58,000), founded in the 15th century. It was known in the past only as a producer of attar of roses, but today it is an

important industrial centre as well.

One of the country's most famous cultural institutes is the Iskra library club, founded in 1873 with library, theatre, cinema, and a museum with valuable exhibits. Here is also the famous Kazanluk Thracian Tomb, a unique monument of ancient Thracian art. It is believed that a prominent Thracian chieftain was buried in the tomb in the 4th-3rd century B.C. It consists of an antechamber, a stone corridor and a domed chamber. The frescoes on the walls, the corridor ceiling and the dome are kept at constant air temperature and humi-

dity. The tomb is under the protection of UNESCO. There is a model nearby which is open to visitors.

Hotels: Kazanluk, 3 stars, 199 rooms, tel. 2-72-10; Roza, 2 stars, 1 Tolbukhin Blvd.; Zornitsa, 2 stars, tel. 2-23-84.

Motel: Krunska Koriya, 2 stars, restaurant, 5 km from the town.

Camp sites: Krunska Koriya, 1 star, 5 km from the town. 12 km north of Kazanluk along the E-85 road at the very foot of the Balkan Range are the golden domes of the impressive church built 1897-1902 in memory of those who died in the Russo-Turkish War of Liberation 1877-78. The iconostasis of gilded woodwork was made in Moscow as were the bells while the icons were painted at the Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos, Greece. Part of the frescoes are from 1902 while the rest were painted in 1959.

A road leads up Mount Shipka to the granite monument to the handful of Russians and Bulgarians defending the Shipka Pass against the 35,000-strong army of Suleiman Pasha. The monument contains the remains of the defenders of the pass.

The neighbouring peak, Bouzloudja, has a huge monu-

ment to Communism and Socialism.

East along E-772 is the village of Muglizh (pop. 5,500) where the September uprising against fascism broke out in 1923. Sliven (pop. 98,000) is situated at the foot of the Eastern Balkan Range. The Blue Stones (a picturesque rock area) tower over the town. Sliven was first mentioned in the journal of the Arabian traveller, Idrissi, 1153, but archaeological studies in the area show there was a settlement in Roman times. Bulgaria's first textile mills were opened here in 1834.

Tourist attractions:

Monument to Hadji Dimiter in the town centre.

Monument to the Soviet Army stands on Haman Bair hill in a park south of the town.

Bust of Dobri Zhelyazkov in the town centre.

Bust of Dobri Chintoulov in Hadji Dimiter's Square. Bust of Subi Dimitrov — Sliven's favourite who when surrounded by police in 1941 killed himself so as not to fall into their hands.

District History Museum, 6 Lenin Blvd. in a house built 1895 by the Tryavna master, Kolyu Ganchev, a pupil of Kolyu

Ficheto, tel. 2-24-94.

Hadji Dimiter Museum, 2 Assenova St., restored and open to visitors. The spacious hall has an exhibition of original documents, weapons, photos, clothes, etc. Tel. 2-24-96.

Panayot Hitov Museum, 7 Cherno More St. Two of the rooms have an exhibition of documents, personal belongings,

clothes, weapons, etc. Tel. 2-24-94.

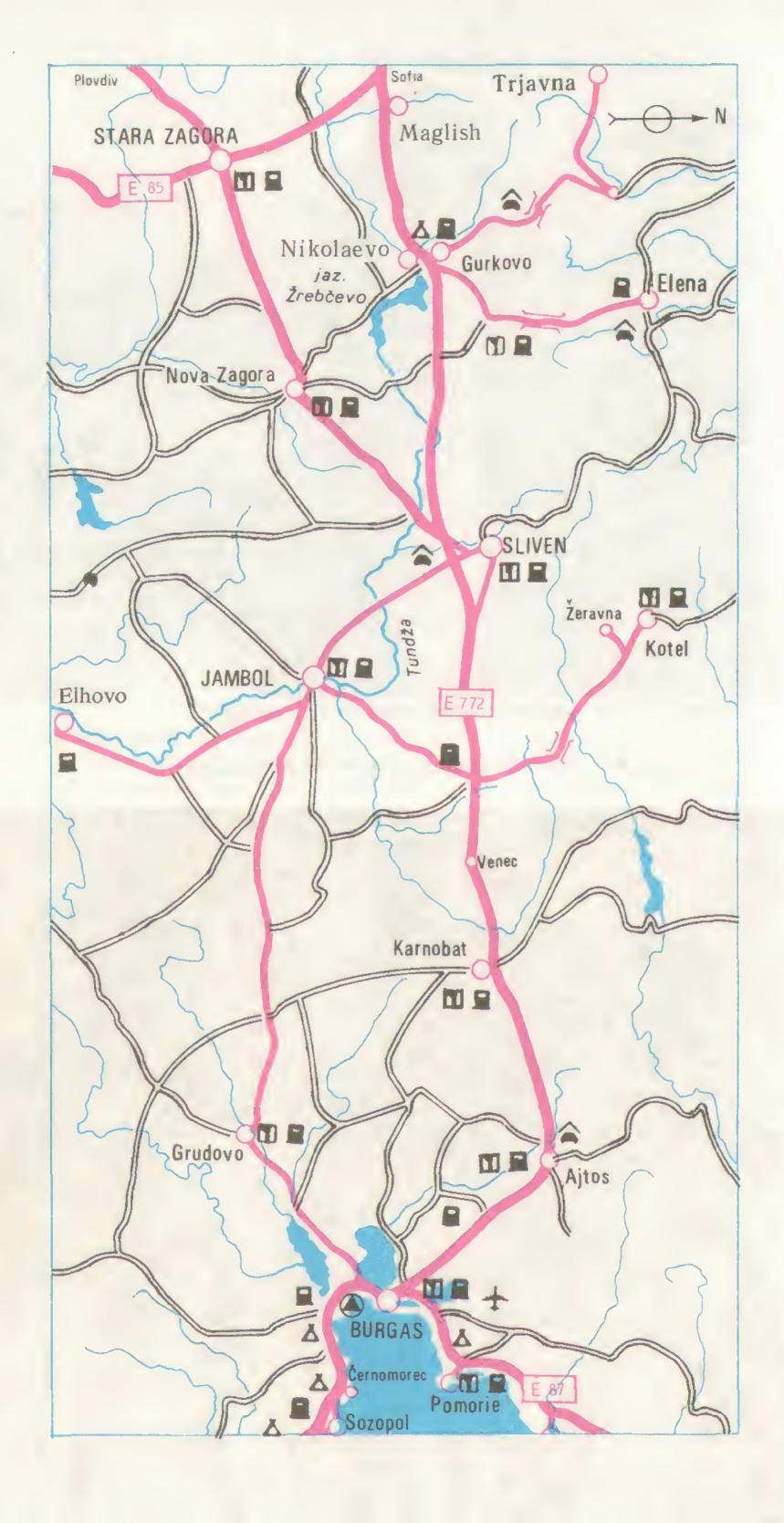
Dobri Chintoulov Museum in the courtyard of St Sofia Church. Tel. 2-24-94.



Klissoura. The monument of the April 1876 Uprising

Kazanluk, Murals of the Thracian tomb |4th-3rd centuries B.C.|





The Sliven 19th-century life Museum, 5 Simeon Tabakov St.

Hotels: Sliven, 3 stars, town centre, tel. 2-69-11. A 16-storey building with 16 suites and 250 beds, restaurant, coffee shop and roof-top restaurant; Sinite Kamuni, 2 stars; Zora — 1 star.

The Aglika Camp site, 1 star, near the Sliven spas.

The Rest and Tourist bureau is in the Sliven hotel, tel. 2-69-11.

The Sliven Spas, 12 km southeast of Sliven, are among the most famous in Bulgaria. The curative power of their waters was known in ancient times. The baths itself are Ottoman architecture. The temperature of the water is 53°C and is recom-

mended for gastro-intestinal, gall and liver diseases.

30 km from Sliven the road forks left to the museum-village of Zheravna (pop. 1,000). The village was founded about the 14th century. In the 17th-19th centuries the population gained its livelihood from stockbreeding, mainly sheepbreeding, and crafts. The spacious and impressive wooden houses with wide eaves, high stone walls and solid nail-studded gates, date from that period. The interiors are decorated with wood carvings and furnished with gaily coloured carpets and tufted rugs.

One 17th century house is the birthplace of Sava Filaretov, a Bulgarian teacher of the National Revival period. It has a covered verandah and living room with a carved wooden ceiling. The Russi Chorbadji house is now an art gallery. The birth-

place of writer Yordan Yovkov is now a museum.

8 km north of the turning to Zheravna is another remarkable town — Kotel (pop. 9,000). Kotel was founded by immigrants in 1545 amid wooded hills. It was named Kotel (Bulgarian for cauldron) — the waters of its abundant springs boil as if in a cauldron. Only a quarter of the old town survived the great fire of 1894. This part of the town is an architectural reserve. An ethnographic museum is housed in one of the old buildings and not far from it is the History Museum in the school building of 1869. The first school for folk-instrument musicians was opened in Kotel and there is also a school for arts and crafts. The weaving of goat hair rugs and carpets is typical for Kotel.

The Kotel hotel compound, 2 stars, can accommodate 57

and has a restaurant. Tel: 28-65.

23 km southwest of the turning is Yambol (pop. 83,000). In ancient times it was known by its Thracian name of Cabile, the ruins of which were discovered some ten kilometres north of present-day Yambol. After capturing the town, Phillip II of Macedonia built a strong fortress where he imprisoned his disobedient vassals. In 72 B.C. Mark Luculus seized the town and it became an important junction on the Roman road from Anhialo to Salonika along the Toundja valley. The town was completely devastated during invasions by the barbarians.



The Byzantines built a new town in the 11th century called Diampolis, though in 1357 it was called by the Slav name of Dubilin. In 1373, after a four-month siege, it was captured by the Ottomans. Hadji Kalfa describes 17th-century Yambol as a town with five mosques, two baths and many gardens. After liberation from the Turks the town developed as an agricultural centre. In 1890 a railway line to Bourgas was built which enabled the establishment of other industries. Nowadays the town is an important economic and cultural centre.

The town has a drama theatre, a music theatre, a chamber orchestra, a district history museum, a hospital, technical col-

leges and other schools.

Hotels: Toundja, 2 stars, 12 storeys, on the bank of the Toundja, accommodating 250, tel. 2-44-33. A restaurant with some open-air seats, night club, coffee shop, hairdresser's, information bureau and rent-a-car office.

Baikal, 3 Karagyozov St.

Tourist attractions: Kourshoum Market — a covered market in the town centre. The 18th-century Eski Mosque is nearby.

The church and monument near the village of Shipka







Sliven. The Monument to voevode Hadji Dimiter

Mount Shipka, The Monument to Freedom Yambol



District History Museum, 12 Byalo More St., with ethno-

graphic collection.

Southwest on the bank of the Toundja, is St George's Church, 1737. It has a carved walnut iconostasis made by Debur masters at the end of the 19th century.

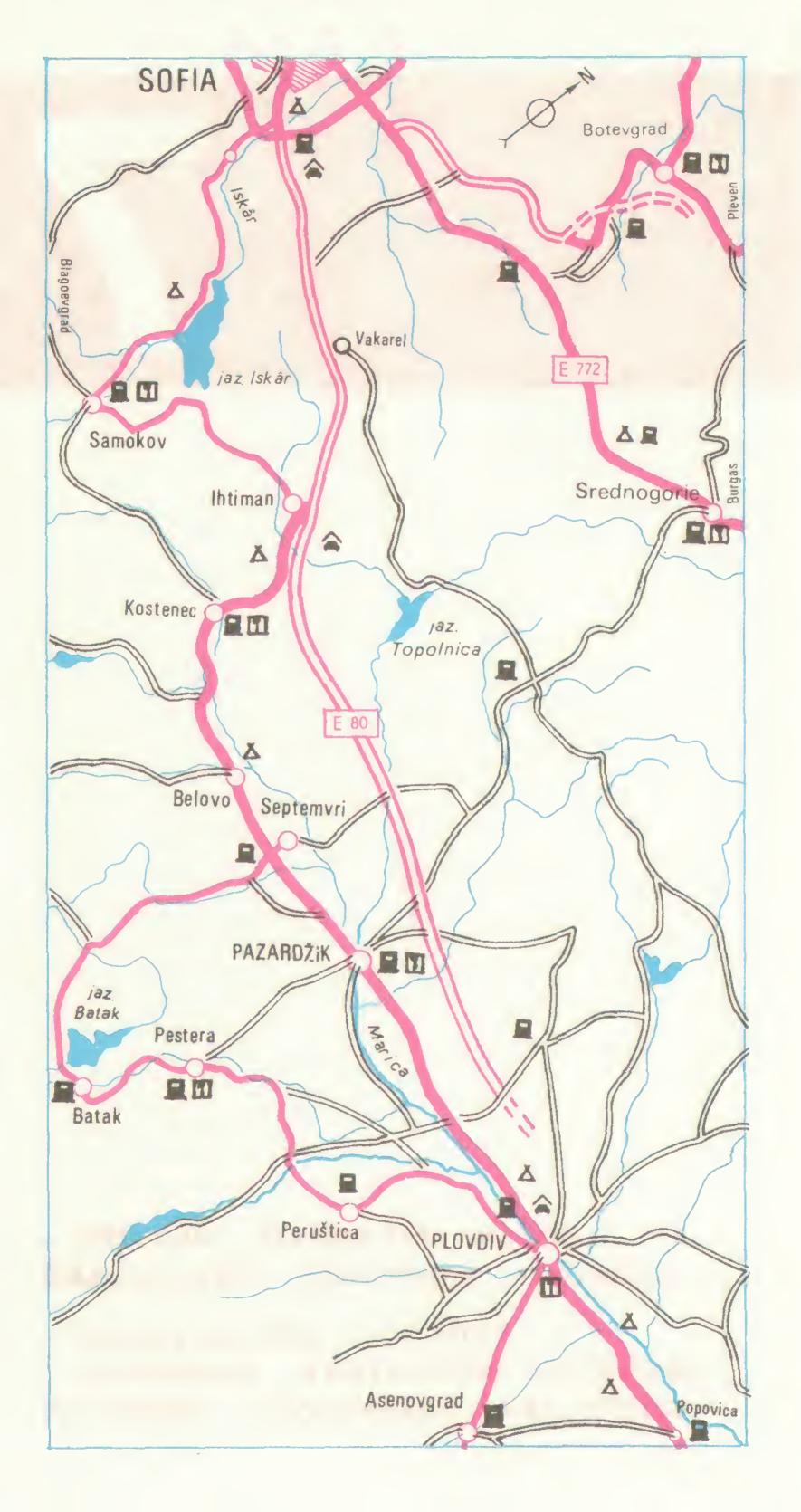
Further east of Sliven through Karnobat (pop. 23,650) and Aitos (pop. 21,200) lie Bourgas Spas, 15 km before the

port of Bourgas.



SOFIA – PAZARDJIK – PLOVDIV – HASKOVO – HARMANLI – SVILENGRAD

PLOVDIV - ASSENOVGRAD BACHKOVO MONASTERY - NARECHEN CHEPELARE - PAMPOROVO - SMOLYAN



7. SOFIA – PAZARDJIK – PLOVDIV – HASKOVO – HARMANLI – SVILENGRAD (302 km)

Crossing the Thracian Lowlands from Sofia to Plovdiv leads along the ancient Roman road from Singidunum (Belgrade) across Serdika (Sofia) and Philippopolis (Plovdiv) to Constantinople (Istanbul). Each new invasion along this road brought ruin in its train on which a new culture was built only to fall to ruin in its turn. Ten km from the town centre towards Pazardjik is the Goroublyane motel with the Goroublyansko Hanche national taverna, with dishes typical of the region around Sofia. The motel can accommodate 56. There is an information bureau and an exchange bureau. The Varna camp site is 200 m from the motel, tel. 78-12-13.

The next town is *Ihtiman* (pop. 11,500). Three kilometres north of which are the ruins of the medieval town of Stipone. Eledjik Hotel, 2 stars, 120 beds, tel. 24-05. Ihtiman motel, 3 stars, 3 floors, 44 double rooms, a restaurant, night club, free

shop and information bureau. Tel. 99-71-41 - 2301.

9 km from Intiman along the E-80 road is the Leshta Han restaurant, with its lentil speciality. A further 10 km to the left of the road is the Mirovo national inn. There are bungalows around it for use in summer.

Then comes Kostenets (pop. 10,500).

The mineral spring in the Momin Prohod residential area is 25th highest in the world for radioactivity and its water temperature is 64.5°C. It is recommended for diabetes, ulcers, rheumatism and skin diseases. The town has an international specialist children's sanatorium and other therapeutical clinics and rest houses. Georgi Dimitrov balneological and climatic resort is open all the year round, the water temperature of the mineral spring is 46°C.

Further on 5 km from Belovo is a camp site with a swimming pool containing mineral water. The camp site has a restaurant and a parking lot. To the right of Belovo a road leads to the mountain resort of Yundola situated between the Rila

and the Rhodope Mountains at an altitude of 1,350 m.

40 km further on is the town of *Velingrad* (pop. 25,000). The town's 77 mineral springs have a round-the-clock capacity of 5 million litres. Water temperature is from 22 to 90.5°C. In addition to rheumatism, the waters are also used to treat diseases of the peripheral nervous system, gynaecological diseases, inflammatory processes of the respiratory system and the lungs. As a climatic resort Velingrad is also suitable for the treatment of bronchial asthma, chronic bronchitis, thyrotoxicosis, secondary anaemia, etc. Vela Peeva, a prominent partisan, was born in Velingrad and the town is now named after her. She was wounded in 1944 in a skirmish with the po-



Velingrad

lice but managed to escape and hid in the mountains for 37 days. She was discovered and after a five-hour struggle she took her own life. Her birthplace is now a museum.

The Kleptouza spring with a capacity of 900 l/sec, is in the Chepino quarter. There is a restaurant nearby.

Wood and wood-processing hold a prominent place in the town's economy. The huge hothouses outside the town heated by hot mineral water, grow carnations, 80 per cent of which are exported to the USSR, Austria, FR Germany, Norway and even to the Netherlands.

Hotel-restaurant Zdravets, 2 stars, accommodating 200, tel. 26-82, large restaurant. There are two camp sites near the town — Kleptouza and Velyuva Banya.

Further along E-80, is *Pazardjik* (pop. 73,400), the centre of a rich and fertile region. Situated on both banks of River Maritsa, it was founded in 1485. The first inhabitants were Tartars who guarded the Big Market which was held here. Bulgarians settled here in the second half of the 16th century. There are mineral baths with water from the Rhodopes.

Sights:

Cathedral of the Virgin Mary is Pazardjik's most important building. It was built in 1837 and is a magnificent example of National Revival architecture. It is made of pink stone



and is known mostly for its walnut iconostasis by Debur wood carvers. The oldest icon dates from 1814.

St Constantine and Elena Church, Benkovski St. is the se-

cond largest church with icons painted by local artists.

Stanislav Dospevski Museum. 50, G.Dimitrov Blvd. is combined with the district art gallery. It was built in 1864 by Bratsigovo masters. Some of the walls are decorated with paintings by Stanislav Dospevski himself.

Kourshoum (Bullet) Mosque - Bratya Miladinovi St. built

1667, Pazardjik's oldest building.

The Synagogue, Assen Zlatarov St. built 1850. The ceiling represents a carved sun, surrounded by round rosettes and interlacing geometrical figures.

Nikolaki Hristovich's House, 8 Otets Paissi St. built 1850. Its architecture is similar to that of the baroque house in Plov-

div.

Kouzmov House, 5 Benkovski St., early 19th century, has very finely executed eaves. It is a two-storey building with bay windows.

Pozharov House near the St Constantine and Elena Church in Benkovski St. also resembles the baroque house in Plovdiv.

Sakaliev House, 15 Trakiiska St. with carved ceilings. Hadji Stoyanov house and the house of Konstantin Velichkov, now a branch of the District History Museum, are also worth visiting.

Metodi Shatarov Monument-Ossuary is situated on an island in the River Maritsa in memory of Metodi Shatarov and

other partisans who perished in 1941-1944.

Old Post Office with its Gothic tower.

The District History Museum, 5 Assen Zlatarov St., tel. 2-55-45.

The District Art Gallery 'Stanislav Dospevski', 11b 9 September St., tel. 2-55-46.

The Drama Theatre, K. Velichkov Blvd., tel. 2-75-35.

The Amateur Operetta Theatre — the Trade Union House of Culture.

Symphony Orchestra.

Hotel Trakiya, 2 stars, 4-storey, in Red Square, accommodates 228, restaurant, coffee shop, night club, national restau-

rant and an exchange bureau. Tel. 2-60-06.

A small detour to the south of Pazardjik goes through several towns and villages active in the April 1876 uprising. After 20 km we reach the town of *Peshtera* (pop. 18,000), situated on both banks of Stara Reka river. It is well-known as a mountain resort but has rapidly developed recently as an industrial centre. In the town centre is an old poplar tree, whose circumference measures 10 m.

7 km east is the small village of Bratsigovo (pop. 6,000). Though small, its name is engraved in Bulgarian history. It was founded in the 16th century when Rhodope inhabitants, seeking refuge from forced convertion to Mohammedanism, settled in the small valley nestling in the folds of the mountain. The village developed quickly. Its inhabitants took an active part in the April 1876 Uprising, and from April 30 to May 5 they waged a fierce battle with the Bashibazouk and regular Turkish army.

16 km southwest of Peshtera is another village — Batak (pop. 6,500), among oak and beech forests. During the April uprising 1876 Batak people fought and finally had to surrender. Wholesale massacre followed. Over 5,000 men, women, old people and children were killed. The stone church of St. Nede-

Îya still has blood on its walls.

During the 2nd World War the Batak partisan detachment laid the beginnings of the legendary Anton Ivanov brigade. South of Batak, in the bosom of the mountain, dug-outs used by partisans can still be seen.



Batak

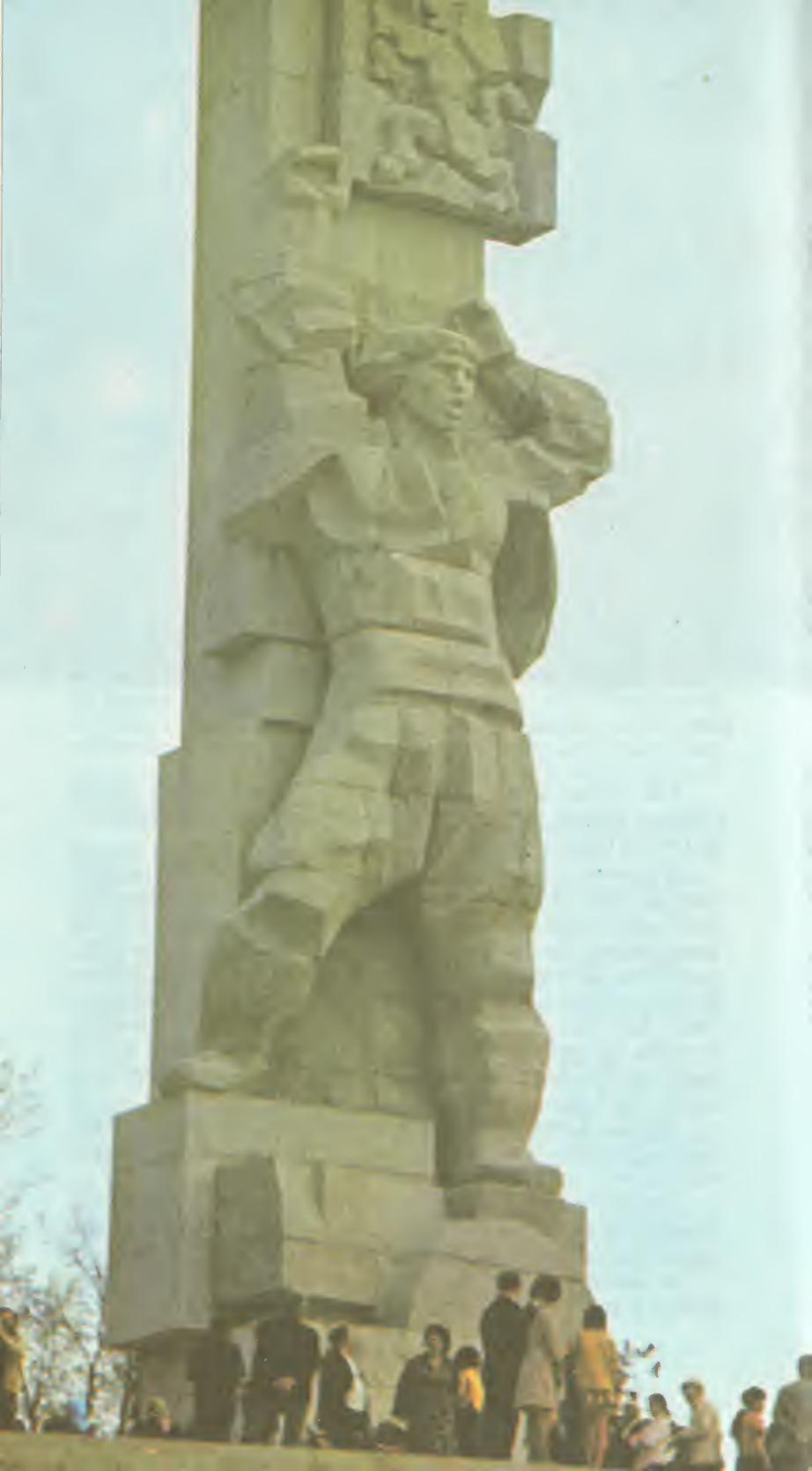
The region around the Batak dam is a mountain resort with rest houses, children's camps and a tourist compound of the Orbita Bureau for Youth excursions.

A detour to the north of Pazardjik leads to Panagyurishte (pop. 22,000) in the Sredna Gora mountain. This town also played an important role in the April 1876 Uprising. Toutev House, where the April uprising was declared is worth a visit, also Raina Knyaginya Museum, Prof. Marin Drinov's house, the Cherry-Tree Cannon monument, Lekov House, Kamenski House and the April Uprising Memorial. Thracian treasure from the 3rd century B.C. was found near the town. It is also known as the Panagyurishte gold treasure and a copy of it is kept in the Archaeology Museum in Plovdiv.

Hotels: Kamengrad, 2 stars, 4 floors, 117 beds, restaurant, night club, national taverna. Tel. 26-84, 28-77; Obori-

shte, one star, accommodating 107.

Ten kilometres from Panagyurishte in the Sredna Gora mountain is the Oborishte Wood. In 1876 the First Bulgarian Grand National Assembly was held here where the decision to rise against Turks was taken. Annual celebrations are held on May 2 and 3 to commemorate the April Uprising.



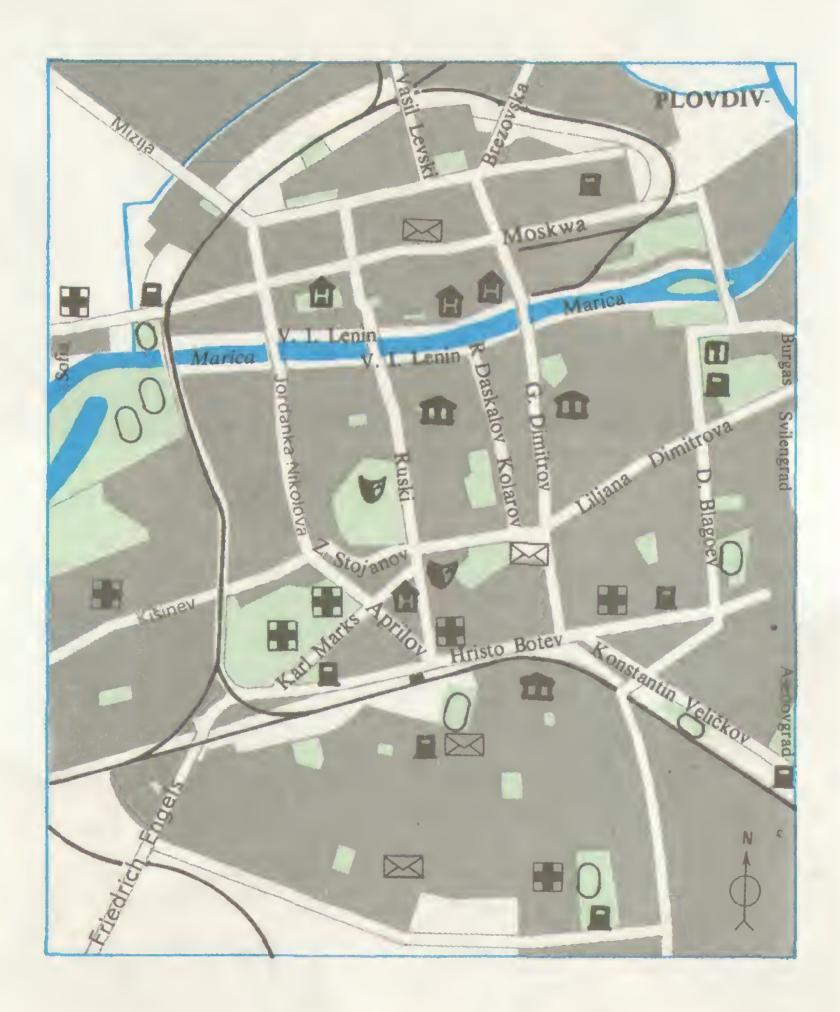




Along the E-80, 9 km before *Plovdiv*, is Maritsa tourist compound with a motel, a restaurant, camping site, swimming

pool and pavilions selling food and drinks.

Philippopolis is the largest and most beautiful town in the Thracian lowlands. Its beauty shines bright and a great river flows near. This is the River Hebur and the town is the work of the famous Phillip', — so the Roman writer Lucian described Plovdiv.



Plovdiv (pop. 350,000) is Bulgaria's second largest city, situated in the centre of the Upper Thracian lowlands on six hills on the River Maritsa. Founded more than 8,000 years ago, Plovdiv has witnessed many invasions. At the end of the second millennium B.C. it was called Eumolpias, the Thracians

renamed it Poulpoudeva, while in 342 B.C. Phillip II of Macedonia seized it and called it Philippopolis. In Roman times the town was named Trimontium — the town of the three hills. The Slavs in their turn named it Puldin. The town was incorporated into the First Bulgarian State in 815, and in 1364 it was

seized by the Ottomans who called in Filibe.

Remains of Neolithic settlements have been found in the Filipovo and Universitetski quarters of the town. Evidence shows that there was a settlement here in the 4th millennium B.C. Excavations so far show that there was an Iron Age settlement and a Thracian fortified settlement which was later reconstructed by Phillip of Macedonia. Under the Romans the town grew to be one of the largest in the province of Thrace. It was well-appointed, with a water supply and surrounded by two fortress walls. The inner wall is well preserved in some places. The town was supplied with water through a 13-kmlong aquaduct. Excavations made to a depth of 5-7 m show that in the 2nd-3rd centuries Trimontium flourished and had a stadium for 30,000, an amphitheatre and baths. In 251 the Goths devastated the town and it gradually sank into decay. When the Roman Empire disintegrated, the town remained in the Eastern Roman Empire, i.e. Byzantium. It was not until the reign of Justinian the Great (527-565) that the town was restored and became a strong fortress on the borders of Byzantium. Alternatively changing hands, now to Bulgarians, now to Byzantines, the town was finally incorporated into the Bulgarian state by Khan Kroum in 809.

During 18th and 19th centuries Plovdiv became one of the centres of the Bulgarian National Revival. The struggle for Bulgarian schools and for religious and political independence intensified. The first school was opened in 1836 in the courtyard of St Petka Church, while in 1850 the first class school was

opened.

On January 16, 1878 Russian troops liberated Plovdiv. Following the Berlin Congress (June 1878), which revised the San Stefano Peace Treaty of March 1878, Plovdiv became the capital of Eastern Roumelia (a region in South Bulgaria) subor-

dinated to the Sultan politically and militarily.

A revolutionary movement began in Plovdiv, which later brought about the unification on September 6, 1885 of Eastern Roumelia and the Principality of Bulgaria. The first socialists appeared in Plovdiv in 1885-1886 and the first socialist organization was founded in 1893 by Dimiter Blagoev who worked here from 1904 to 1919. Plovdiv communists were in the front ranks of the struggles from 1941-1944.

The town is now one of the country's largest economic and cultural centres accounting for 7% of industry. The world famous Plovdiv Fair was held annually from 1934 and in 1980

it became a biennial event.



Plovdiv. The ancient stadium

Plovdiv. The ancient theatre





Plovdiv. The Ethnographic Museum

The cultural life of the city is very rich. Plovdiv has a philharmonic orchestra, a puppet theatre and an opera company, as well as a drama theatre. There are several higher educational establishments in the town for medicine, food industry, agriculture, music, research institutes, English and Bulgarian language schools and the Paissi of Hilendar University. There is an Archaeology Museum, a National Revival Museum, a Museum of the Workers' and Revolutionary Movement, art gallery, etc.

Tourist attractions:

The old part of the town, the *Three Hills*, is an architectural reserve. In Roman times the Three Hills were known as Trimontium; few cities in Bulgaria have such picturesque spots from the National Revival Period. On both sides of the cobbled narrow streets rise the walls of old National Revival houses, painted facades, bay windows and vaults, eaves curved like yokes, solid wooden nail-studded gates, grassed courtyards, stone wells. A big granary from the Roman times was discovered on Nebet tepe hill. The fortress walls were destroyed and restored again and again during Roman and Byzantine times, and later under the Bulgarians. The eastern gate of the fortress, Hissar kapiya, was rebuilt and repaired several times, as was the Round Tower to its southeast.



Plovdiv. The Pantheon of the Immortal

One of the major recent archaeological finds is the Ancient Theatre (2nd century) discovered in the Old town. It has been restored and now carries out its former functions. An ancient stadium was discovered in the main street which complements it.

The Argir Koyumdjioglou House on the eastern slope of Nebet Tepe hill, built 1847, is typical of Plovdiv symmetrical houses. It holds the Ethnographic Museum. An international chamber music festival is held in the museum's courtyard each September.

The Georgiadi House east of Hissar Kapiya was built in 1846. It has a picturesque facade with bay windows and yoke-like eaves. It houses the Museum of the National Revival and

of the National Liberation Struggles.

The Alphonse de Lamartine Museum, built in 1829-1830. It is also a typical Plovdiv symmetrical house. The famous French poet Lamartine lived here in 1833 after his return from the Orient.

The St Constantine and Elena Church, built 1832 on the remains of an older church. The belfry has five storeys. The gilded iconostasis is in early Baroque style and was made by the Debur engraver Ivan Pashkoula. Many of the icons were

painted by Zahari Zograph in 1836.

The St Marina Church built 1852-1853 on the southwestern part of Taxim Tepe hill. It was the main episcopal church. The woodcarvings of the iconostasis, the pulpit and the bishop's throne are particularly valuable. The holy gates feature scenes from the life of St George and St Dimiter, Adam and Eve and Samson Killing the Lion. The icons were painted by Stanislav Dospevski.

The Imaret Mosque built 1444-1445 is one of many monuments from the Ottoman period. An inn near the mosque has been restored and is now a branch of the archaeological

museum.

The Djoumaya Mosque, 19 Noemvri Square built mid-15th century. The Friday mosque had a big service held every Friday. Its domes are covered with lead sheets. Four solid columns carry nine impressive vaults inside.

The clock tower is one of Europe's oldest and is built on

Sahat Tepe hill. It was restored in 1812.

On Liberators' Hill is a monument to Russian soldiers who died during the liberation from Ottoman domination in 1878, and a Monument to the Soviet Army.

On Suedinenie (Union) Square a monument has been unveiled to commemorate the Union of the two Bulgarias in 1885. The sculptor is a famous Bulgarian — Velichko Milenkov.

The Archaeological Museum, Suedinenie Square, has four departments: pre-class and early class system, slave system, feudal system and a numismatic department. On display in the slave system department are finds from Philippopolis and the Panagyuristhe gold treasure — 6.149 kg of solid gold. It is comprised of 9 vessels: an amphora-rhyton, four rhytons, 3 jugs and one phial and dates back to the 3rd century B.C.

The State Art Gallery, 15 Vassil Kolarov St.

Hotels: Novotel Plovdiv, 2 Zlatyu Boyadjiev St., 5 stars, 7 floors, 8 suites and 314 double rooms, restaurant, day bar and night club, national restaurant, coffee shop, free shop, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, sauna, bowling alley, hairdresser's, post office, covered parking lot, air-conditioning. Tel. 5-51-71. Trimontium, 2 Kapitan Raicho, 3 stars, 4 floors with 4 suites and 260 beds, restaurant, night club, national restaurant, coffee shop, hairdresser's, post office, information and renta-car bureau. Tel. 2-55-61. Leningrad Park-hotel, 97 Moskva Blvd, 3 stars, 21 floors with 26 suites and 675 beds, restaurant, night club, day bar, indor swimming pool, free shop, hairdresser's, post office, coffee shop, information bureau. Tel. 2-58-03. Maritsa, 5 G. Dimitrov St., 3 stars, 11 floors with 4 suites, 47 single and 120 double rooms, restaurant, day bar, coffee shop, hairdresser's, rent-a-car office. Tel. 5-27-35. Leip-



Plovdiv, Novotel Plovdiv

zig, 70 Rousski Blvd, 2 stars, 10 floors, 2 suites and 250 beds, restaurant, night club, information bureau. Tel. 3-22-50. Bulgaria, 13 Patriarch Evtimii St., 2 stars, 4 floors, seven suites, 25 single and 46 double rooms, restaurant, information and rent-a-car bureau. Tel. 2-60-64.

Camp sites:

Maritsa – 9 km west of Plovdiv, 3 stars; Trakiya – 4 km east, 2 stars; Chaya, 2 stars, 13 km east of Plovdiv.

Motels:

Maritsa, 3 stars, 9 km west.

Tourist information bureau, 39 Vassil Kolarov St., Tel. 2-48-71.

Balkantourist Bureau, 35 Vassil Kolarov St. Tel. 2-25-60. Union of Motorists, 129a G.Dimitrov Blvd., tel. 2-47-81. Entertainments:

Trakiiski stan, 35 Puldin St., tel. 2-45-10

Alafrangite, 17 Kiril Nektariev St., tel. 2-98-09 in a 19th-century house. Puldon, 3 Knyaz Tseretelev St.

There are restaurants in all large hotels.



Plovdiv – Hissarya – the village of Banya (54 km)

42 km north of Plovdiv is Bulgaria'a biggest spa resort of Hissarya (pop. 9,000), at the foot of the Sredna Gora mountains. There are 22 mineral springs whose total flow is 4,000 l/min. They contributed directly to the early settlement of these lands, around 5th millennium B.C. The mineral waters were widely used in Roman times when the settlement became an Emperor's spa. The Romans developed it, built baths, made cobbled streets, sewerage systems, water-mains and built many public buildings. It was then called Dyocletianople. In 251 the Goths devastated the whole region. This prompted the building of a fortress wall, completed in the 4th century. The town flourished in the 5th and 6th centuries when many Christian temples were built here and it became an episcopal centre.

The Hissarya fortress was seized by the Ottomans in 1364. Turkish colonial settlers arrived in the 16th century and many

new baths were built.

Archaeological monuments

The fortress wall surrounds an irregular quadrangle protected from the outside by a 4 m deep dyke. The wall had 43 towers, 12 double staircases and 4 gates, the main southern gate is called Gate of the Camels. The north wall is double.

The Roman family tomb, 4th century. The walls are covered with frescoes and it has a mosaic floor. There are two

immovable beds.

The Basilicas. Nine basilicas have been discovered so far, both inside and outside the fortress wall, built in the 5th and 6th centuries.

The Town History Museum

Water temperature of the springs ranges from 37 to 51°C, the water is alkaline, with low mineral content. It is used for diseases of the digestive system — gastritis, stomach and duodenal ulcers, chronic colitis, liver diseases, bilious complaints, chronic hepatitis, kidney diseases: renal calculus, cystitis, chronic nephritis, etc.

Hotels:

Hissar, 4 stars, 8 suites, 55 single and 228 double rooms; restaurant, night club, coffee shop, indoor swimming pool, sauna, hairdresser's, post office, information bureau, covered parking lot, rent-a-car office, tennis court. Augusta, 2 stars, 3 floors, 2 suites and 78 double rooms, restaurant, information bureau, parking lot. Tel. 20-16 and 20-21 Balkan, tel. 20-36. Republika, tel. 20-87.

13 km towards Karlovo is the village of Banya (4,000), famous for its spas, and recommended for the treatment of diabetis, metabolic diseases, neuroses, hypertonia, liver and cardiac diseases. There is a rest centre, a resort clinic and a

hotel-restaurant there.



Hissar. The fortress wall

PLOVDIV – ASSENOVGRAD – BACHKOVO MO-NASTERY – NARECHEN – CHEPELARE – PAMPOROVO – SMOLYAN (102 km)

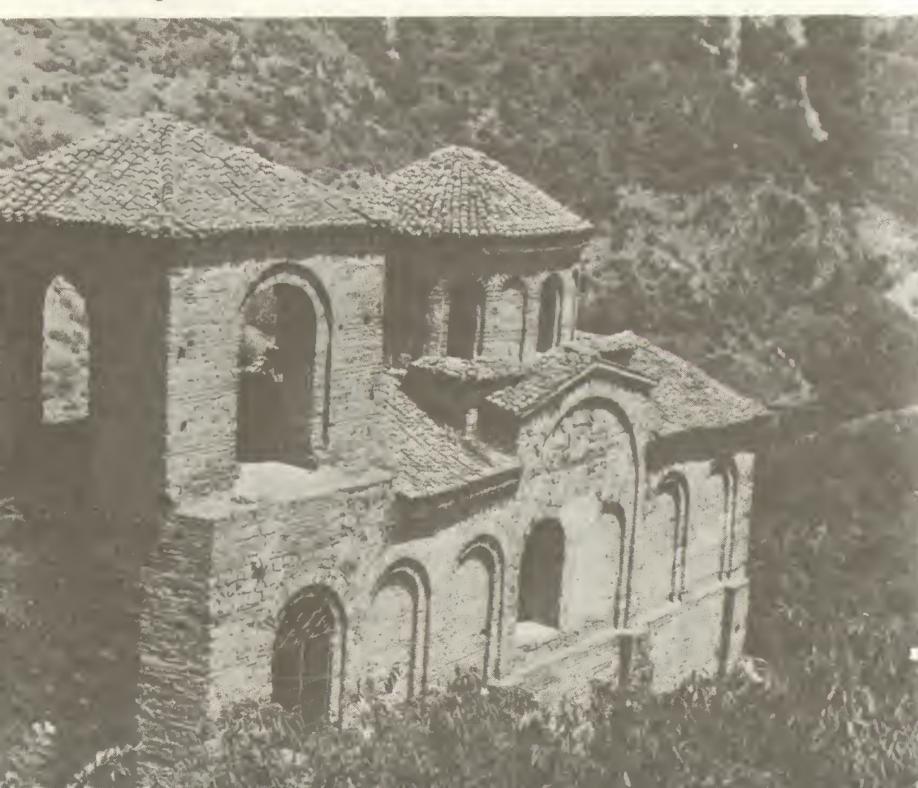
Assenovgrad (pop. 45,332) 19 km from Plovdiv, is situated on the northern slopes of the Rhodopes. Its old name of Stanimaka means 'defence of a pass'. It was first mentioned in 1083, but the remains of Thracian mounds near the town show that it has an even older history. It was a defence fortress in the Middle Ages. At present the town is the centre of an agricultural region with a well-developed food industry (tobacco, canning, meat and meat-processing, wines — Stanimashka Malaga and Mavroud).

Tourist attractions are St George's Church, 1843; the Church of Virgin Mary, 1760, with a carved wooden iconostasis, by Debur masters; the Church of St Nicholas, with iconostasis by Tryavna masters; the old Church of St Jan, 13th century, 8 km east of the town is the St Nedelya Monastery which played a major role in the struggles for independent religion in the 19th century.



The Bachkovo Monastery

Assenovgrad. The Church of the Holy Virgin





Chudnite Mostove in the Rhodopes

2.5 km from the town is Assen's Fortress built in the 11th-12th centuries. In 1231 the Bulgarian Tsar, Ivan Assen II, restored and enlarged it. It played a major role in the wars between Bulgarians and Byzantines. In the early 18th century it was destroyed, and only a 7th-century one-nave church remains.

Assenovets hotel, 2 stars, 11 storeys, 4 suites, 22 single and 122 double rooms; restaurant, night club, coffee shop, day bar,

information office, tel. 20-85.

Nine kilometres from Assenovgrad is *Bachkovo Monastery*, situated on the steep bank of the Chepelarska river. It is Bulgaria's second largest after Rila Monastery and is included in the World List of cultural monuments of UNESCO.

Founded in 1083 by the Georgian monk Grigorii Bacuriani, it has been reconstructed several times. The only building preserved from the time of its foundation is the two-storeyed church and ossuary of Archangel Michael. The church murals date from the Comnenus dynasty (12th-14th century).

The central church of Virgin Mary was built in 1604, during Ottoman rule. Early in the 18th century the monastery was extended and another church, St Nicholas, was built, with

murals by Zahari Zograph.

During Ottoman domination the monastery was a centre of education. It had a large library. Now it has a museum collection with interesting icons, gospels, jewellery, coins, etc.

There is a restaurant at the monastery and beds are also

available for guests. Bachkovo camp site is near by.

14 km from Bachkovo Monastery is the Narechen spa (1,800), situated on both banks of the Chepelarska river, at an altitude of 620 m. Its climate combines the moderate continental climate of South Bulgaria and a Mediterranean climate.

Summer is warm, but not hot, and winter is mild.

The mineral springs are radioactive. There is a sanatorium with a polyclinic, three mineral water pools, physiotherapy (electrolux treatment) and paraffin treatment. Various diseases treated include: functional diseases of the nervous system, cardiac diseases, metabolic diseases, diabetes, gout and obesity. There are several balneosanatoria in the resort in addition to Zornitsa hotel, accommodating 136, restaurant, coffee shop, information bureau and parking lot. Tel. 274.

14 km from Narechen is a turning to the right of the main road, leading to a unique natural phenomenon — the Rock Bridges, also known by their Turkish name of Er Kyupriya. These are rock formations built by nature over thousands of years. The upper bridge is 96 m long and overhangs a deep abyss. The second is a 60 m-long tunnel and is 200 m below the

upper one.

A further 27 km along the main road is the picturesque mountain town of *Chepelare* (pop. 7,000) in ancient coniferous forests. It was founded in the beginning of the 18th century. Wood and wood processing industries are well developed.

Spelaeological museum (cave dwellings) is of interest.

Zdravets hotel, 2 stars, 8 storeys, accommodating 150; restaurant, coffee shop, rent-a-car bureau, information office. Tel. 21-77.

10 km south is the mountain resort of *Pamporovo*. It is situated at an altitude of 1,650 m in the heart of the Rhodopes Winter here is mild and pleasant, influenced by the Aegean, and proper winter weather begins in January. There is a ski-school for beginners and numerous beginners ski tracks. Ski and ski shoes can be rented. There are many ski-tracks for experienced skiers and fast runs.

Hotel Perelik, 3 stars, 200 double rooms, 10 single rooms and 36 de-luxe rooms, swimming pool, sauna, garage and parking lot, restaurant, national restaurant, day bar, and disco.

Hotel Mourgavets, 3 stars, accommodating 160, restaurant, rooftop cafeteria.

The Rozhen-Prespa hotel compound: two hotels, 2 stars, 357 beds; restaurants, bars, coffee-shops.

Orfei – 2 stars, 182 beds; Panorama, 2 stars, 160 beds.



Pamporovo

Snezhanka, 2 stars, accommodating 106. Each of these last three hotels has a restaurant, coffee shop, day bar, night club and national restaurant. The Chevermeto restaurant offers typical Rhodope dishes. Malina restaurant is on the road to the village of Shiroka Luka, and has Bulgarian specialities: Rhodope pie, hominy, white beans. Panorama camp site, 4 km from Smolyan with bungalows.

There is a tourist information office in Mourgavets hotel,

tel. 268, 317 and 318.

16 km from Pamporovo, still further into the mountains is Bulgaria's highest town, Smolyan (pop. 37,687), at an altitude of 1,010 m and formed by the villages — Smolyan, Raikovo and Oustovo. To the north are the ruins of the Aetos fortress. During forced conversion to Mohammedanism, any resistance was cruelly suppressed and the village of Smolyan destroyed. The survivors founded a new village near by, known as Pashiakli (Sultan's land). The other two villages also opposed conversion and a great toll was taken in human life. The villages flourished during the National Revival. The late 19th century was marked by revolutionary struggles for independent culture, education and national liberation. Smolyan is the seat of the Rhodope drama theatre and the Rhodope state folk ensemble.



Pamporovo, Mourgavets Hotel

Tourist attractions: The District History Museum, the Art Gallery, monuments of Rhodope architecture from the National Revival period such as the Pangalov House, 1860, which has an ethnographic collection, the Alibeev Police Station, the Sheremetev and Petko Takov Houses.

The only feudal building preserved in Bulgaria – Agoushev House in the village of Mogilitsa, 28 km southwest of Smolyan

in the valley of the River Arda.

Hotels: Smolyan, 3 stars, 5 floors, 169 double rooms and 7 suites; restaurant, day bar, night club, national restaurant, hairdresser's, coffee shop, free shop, parking lot, rent-a-car office, tel. 3-81-76, Sokolitsa, 2 stars 10 floors, accommodating 194, tel. 3-30-85; Orfei, 3 stars, tel 3-20-41, accommodating 170, restaurants and a national restaurant.

Smolyan lakes are north of the town amidst picturesque rocks and coniferous forests. There is a modern chalet ac-

commodating 80.

The village of Shiroka Luka (pop. 2,000), is an architectural and ethnographic reserve. Particularly interesting here are the Sgourov House, Kalamdji House (with an ethnographic collection), the Kirov Houses, the old bridges, Church of the Assumption, 1834.



Pamporovo, Perelik Hotel

Pamporovo. Plan of the ski and chair lifts







A Rhodopean architectural ensemble, 18th century





Smolyan. The Pangalov House, now a museum

The village has a folk-music school. There is a restaurant, a national taverna and tourist chalet.

PLOVDIV – HASKOVO – HARMANLI – SVILENGRAD – KAPITAN ANDREEVO

Among the valley of the Maritsa River, three km from Plovdiv stands the monument to Olga Nikolaevna Skobeleva, mother of the famous Russian General Skobelev who fought in the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War of Liberation, who came to Bulgaria to organize orphanages, hospitals and charity societies and who was murdered near Plovdiv by a band of Circassian brigands on 6 July 1880. The monument marks the spot.

Between Plovdiv and Sadovo is the Trakiya motel, 2 stars,

and Chaiya camp site, 2 stars.

The village of Klokotnitsa lies ten km from the town of Haskovo and here in 1230 Bulgarian troops led by Tzar Ivan Assen II defeated the Epirate ruler Todor Komnin. The Bulgarian troops continued their advance and in a short time had captured Thrace of Adrianople, the Aegean region, the



Smolyan, Sokolitsa Hotel

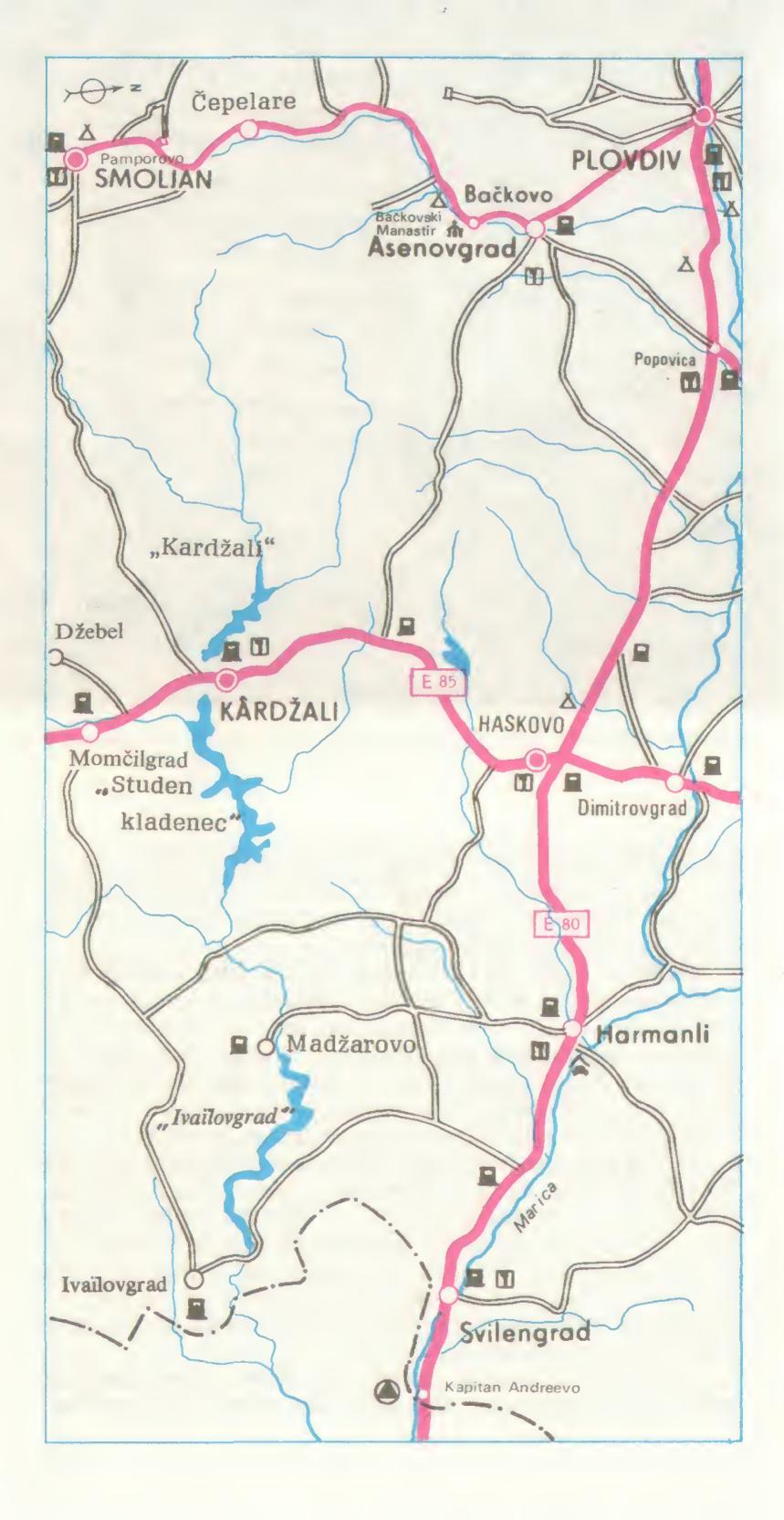
whole of Macedonia and Albania. In honour of this victory Tzar Ivan Assen II ordered a column to be erected in the Church of St Forty Martyrs in Turnovo. Shortly before Haskovo are the

Iztok camp site and Klokotnitsa Inn.

Haskovo (pop. 84,117) existed in the 14th century as a trading settlement. A 9-12 century fortress has been discovered nearby. During Ottoman domination the town had only one Bulgarian quarter, near the Church of St Virgin Mary and the Church of St Archangel Michael. 'After Bulgaria's liberation from the Turks Haskovo developed as a major tobacco producing centre and today it is a large industrial centre.

Points of interest are *The District History Museum*, showing the way of life in the post-liberation period, in Paskalev House, home crafts to the end of the 19th century in the Shishmanov House, church art during the National Revival in the Cyril and Methodius church; Church of St Archangel Michael with its iconostasis of ornate woodcarving executed in 1962; *the Fortress of Assen* near the village of Klokotnitsa and Kenana park, 2 km west of Haskovo.

Balkantourist bureau, Hotel Aida, three stars, with 135 beds in single and double rooms and five suites, restaurant, bar.



coffee shop, information desk and rent-a-car service. Hotel

Republika with 107 beds and restaurant.

Harmanli (pop. 20,000) lies 33 kilometres from Haskovo in a picturesque locality where the Harmanliska River flows into the Maritsa, Harmanli was founded in the 16th century. A bridge, Gurbav Most, spanning the Harmanliska River dates from that period. It is a cultural monument. The wall of a caravan-serai built in 1510 has been preserved in the centre of the town. Today the textile, ceramic and food industries are well developed.



Hotel Hebros, in the centre of Harmanli has 129 beds. The Gergana Motel, two stars, near the E-80 highway, has 16 double rooms, a restaurant, and open-air restaurant, night club and souvenir kiosk.

Svilengrad (population 15,170) is two kilometres from the Bulgarian-Greek border and 15 kilometres from the Turkish border. Once a Thracian settlement, it was later a roadside Roman fortress known as Burdenis. Interesting sights are Stariya Most (the Old Bridge), also known as the Mustafa Pasha Bridge, built with large blocks of stone (1529) and 295 metres long.

Svilena Hotel, five stars, 202 beds, restaurant, bar, taverna,

coffee shop, information desk and rent-a-car service.

Another interesting place is the village of *Mezek*, six kilometres southwest of Svilengrad with its 4th century tomb west of Mezek rise the walls of Neutzikon, one of the best preserved medieval fortresses in Bulgaria, probably built in the 9-12 centuries. At the Kapitan Andreevo border crossing to Turkey there is a motel and restaurant.

HASKOVO – DIMITROVGRAD – STARA ZAGORA (61 km).

10 km along the E-85 highway is *Dimitrovgrad* (pop. 50,000). Dimitrovgrad was built in 1947 on the site of three villages — Rakovski, Mariino and Chernokonyovo. Over 50,000 young men and women volunteers took part in building the town. The first museum of socialist construction was opened in 1954. The Penyo Penev exhibition, named after the Bulgarian poet is in the house wherehe lived in 1956. Dimitrovian Days of Poetry are held annually when the Penyo Penev Prize for Literature is awarded.

Hotels: Moskva, one star, with 41 beds and 2 suites, restaurant, taverna and information desk; Panorama, in the

Penyo Penev park.

Stara Zagora (pop. 134,000) lies in the folds of the Sredna Gora mountains, on the large plain of the same name. It is the sixth largest city in Bulgaria. The Thracians founded the town of Beroe here in the 5th-6th centuries B.C. It was renamed Augusta Trayana when the Romans settled there. In the 5th century (then known as Vereya) it was destroyed by the Huns; it was rebuilt and was again destroyed by the Avars and Slavs in the 7th century. In the Middle Ages its name was Boryui and after its capture by the Ottomans was given the name of Eski Zagra, and was inhabited by both Bulgarians and Turks. The town flourished economically and with the development of education revolutionary ideas emerged. In 1875 an uprising broke out led by the shoe maker Kolyu Ganchev.

During the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War of Liberation Stara Zagora was among the first to experience freedom and destruction. Confronted with attacks from 30,000-strong Turkish army, the small force of Russians and Bulgarian volunteers was compelled to retreat. The town was plundered and

destroyed, and reduced to ashes.

During the war against fascism Stara Zagora was the centre of partisan activities in that area. Today Stara Zagora is a big industrial centre, and there is a modern opera house, a symphony orchestra, an art gallery, a sports hall and a swimming pool.

Tourist attractions are *The District History Museum* with exhibits showing the development of Stara Zagora and its district from ancient times to the present day. There are also prehistoric dwellings; *The Southern Gate* of the fortress wall and an ancient building are 2nd century and there are mosaics from the 4th century.

The Geo Milev Museum House where the poet Geo Milev lived, has a new building in the courtyard devoted to the poets Kiril Hristov, Nikolai Liliev, Ivan Hadjihristov and Vesselin

Hanchev who were all born in Stara Zagora.

There are monuments to those who fell during the 1875 uprising in Stara Zagora, and to the Soviet Army and Lenin.



The V.I. Lenin Park (Ayazmo), has over 100 types of plants and trees from Lebanon, Turkey, Greece, Italy and Spain. In the park there is an open-air theatre, chalet, restaurant and a stadium.

Hotels: Vereya, three stars, 15 single rooms, 209 double rooms and 5 suites, restaurant, bar, night club, coffee shop, information desk and rent-a-car service; Zheleznik, two stars, with eight single rooms, 89 double rooms and 5 suites, restaurant and information desk.

Haskovo-Kurdjali (54 km)

About 54 km south of Haskovo is Kurdjali (pop. 58,000), on the left bank of the River Arda, founded in the early years of Ottoman rule. Under the Berlin Peace Treaty, Haskovo was incorporated into the boundaries of Eastern Roumelia. After the Unification of the Principality of Bulgaria with Eastern Roumelia in 1885, Kurdjali remained within the boundaries of Turkey. It was not until after the Balkan wars that it was restored to Bulgaria.

The rapid development of Kurdjali today is largely due to the two huge dams Stouden Kladenets, east of the town, and

Kurdjali to the west.

Hotel Arpezos, three stars, 27 single rooms, 98 double rooms and 13 suites, restaurant, bar, night club, taverna, coffee shop, swimming pools (indoor and outdoor) and rent-a-car service.

Sights: The famous Kurdjali pyramids in the nearby villages of Dobrovolets, Povet and Zimzelen are natural formations with colours varying from pale green to pink and yellow according to the various minerals in the rocks.

THE BULGARIAN BLACK SEA

The Black Sea is a half-enclosed kidney-shaped sea linked with the Mediterranean by the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. It is bounded on the west by the Balkan Peninsula, on the north and east by the Russian plain and the Caucasus and on the south by the coast of Asia Minor in Turkey. It has low salinity and a high transparency — up to 16-20 m at an average depth of 1,690 m. The temperature of the water in summer averages 23° C.

The Bulgarian coastline (378 km) is less indented than the eastern and southern parts, but is very picturesque. The woody, gentle slopes of the Balkan and Strandja Mountains are covered with vineyards, orchards, trees and shrubs, and are known as the Bulgarian Riviera. Along the entire coast is an almost unbroken strip of fine sand and the sea is clean and shallow. Holiday resorts range from old and romantic fishermen's settlements to the most modern complexes — all with lush greenery, fine sand and clear sea.



DOURANKOULAK - SHABLA - KAVARNA BALCHIK - ALBENA - GOLDEN SANDS DROUZHBA - VARNA
VARNA - KAMCHIYA - OBSOR SLUNCHEV BRYAG - NESSEBUR - POMORIE BOURGAS - SOZOPOL - ROPOTAMO PRIMORSKO



8.DOURANKOULAK – SHABLA – KAVARNA – BALCHIK – ALBENA – GOLDEN SANDS – DROUZHBA – VARNA (109 km)

Dourankoulak is the first Bulgarian village associated with the peasant revolt of May 1900. East of the village is Dourankoulak lake abounding in fish. The large island in the lake has remains from various historical periods from the Stone Age to the 9th-11th century. Between the village and the beach is the Cosmos camp site for 500 tourists. There is a restaurant at

the camp site.

South of Dourankoulak and 24 kilometres from the border is the town of *Shabla* (pop. 5,000). There was a Thracian settlement here in the 6th-5th century B.C. and it was a seaport in Roman times. The people of Shabla took an active part in the 1900 peasant revolt. About five kilometres east of the town is the Shabla Touzla, a tiny lake separated from the sea by a strip of sand. Its radioactive mud has curative properties. The Dobroudja camp site has a restaurant and a shop.

A road forks from Shabla leading to the sea. After about six kilometres it turns south along the coast to the village of Tyuelenovo, near which are several caves cut into the rocks by the sea and several colonies of seals have taken refuge here. Near the village of Kamen Bryag is the picturesque area of Yailata with beautiful rocks and caves. There is an ancient fortress and

other interesting architectural and natural places.

Six kilometres along the coast is the village of St Nicholas where the coast slopes down to Taouk Liman (The Bay of Birds), for harpoon-hunting. There is the Roussalka camp site.

Southwest of Roussalka is the village of *Bulgarevo*, and six kilometres further southeast Cape Kaliakra (Beautiful Cape) rises 60-70 metres above the sea, with reddish rock layers of

particular beauty.

Kaliakra's original name was Tirisis, meaning a Thracian settlement. According to ancient literary sources Lizimah hid his treasures in the caves of Tirizis. The Roman fortress on the Cape known by the name of Tetrasiada was incorporated into the province of Skitiya. During the Eastern Roman Empire the fortress was called Acrecastelum and in the Middle Ages it became Kaliakra. With the settlement of the Bulgarians in these parts the fortress became part of the Bulgarian lands. At the end of the 14th century despot Dobrotich built a fortress here and called it Kalatserka. On July 31, 1971, near Kaliakra, the Russian Admiral Ushakov defeated a Turkish fleet, and in 1912 the Bulgarian torpedo-boat *Druzki* sank the Turkish cruiser *Hamidie*.

Archaeological excavations have uncovered the foundations of fortress walls, dwellings and tombs. In the Middle Ages Kaliakra was surrounded by three defensive fortress walls. One of them was a land fortification. Another was a defensive line about 500 metres in length stretching from east to west blocking access to the Cape. It was erected by Emperor Aurelian in 214-175. The wall has now been partly explored, restored and conserved. Remains from it can be found 1.5 metres above ground. It is supposed to have been 10 metres high and to have had four towers. An early Christian tomb from the 6th century was discovered between the second and the third defensive line. It is rectangular in shape, 2 x 4 metres and 2.40 metres high.

The third defensive line is 160 metres long and its remains are about three metres high. A Roman bath from the 4th century was discovered behind this wall as well as a church from the Middle Ages.

Cape Kaliakra has been declared a National Museum. An interesting exhibition showing artefacts found during excavation has been arranged in one of the caves while another cave

has been converted into a restaurant.

On the E-87 international highway and along the elevations of the Chirakman tableland there was once an ancient town, Byzone, built on the site of an old Thracian settlement. In the 1st century part of the Chirakman elevation along with Bizone sank into the sea. In Roman times the town was restored. It was incorporated into the boundaries of the Bulgarian state. After its devastation by the Tartars Kavarna, as it is now called, was restored as a strong fortress by the independent boyar Balik and his successors Dobrotitsa and Ivanko.

Kavarna today is a rich agricultural area. On the Chirakman elevation are the foundations of several mediaeval churches, and

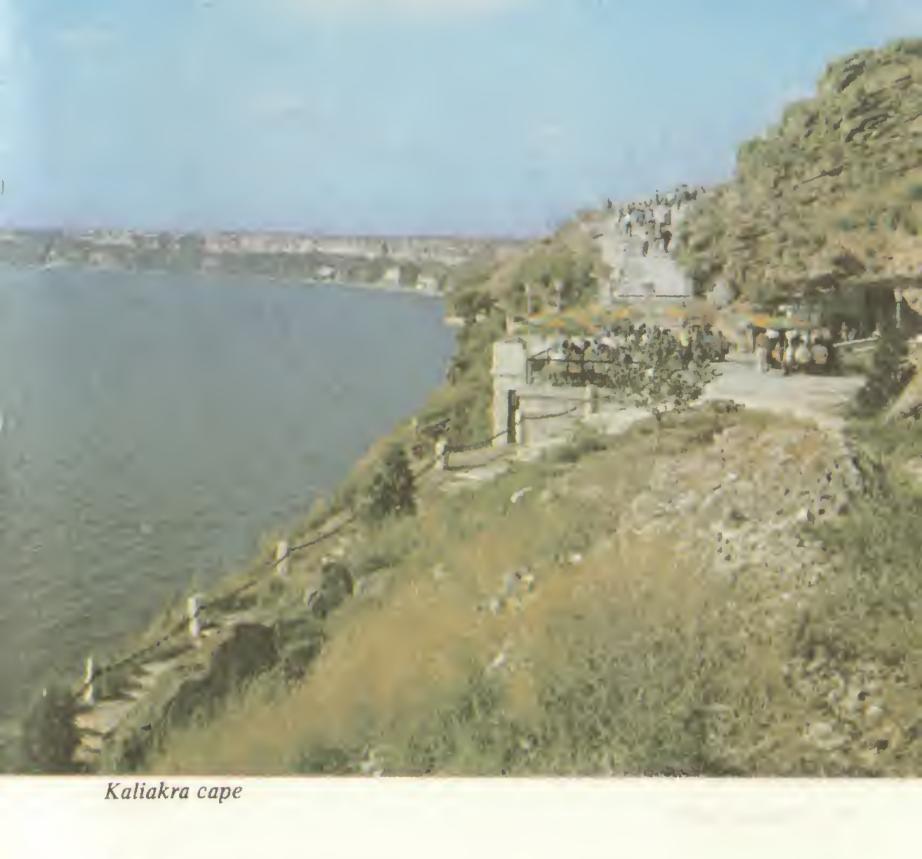
in the south are the foundations of a Roman structure.

Hotels: Dobrotitsa, two stars, with three single rooms, 41 double rooms, four suites, restaurant and information desk; Kavarna Hotel, two stars, with 400 beds; Morska Zvezda (Sea

Star), two stars and the Chaika casino on the beach.

Along the E-87 highway towards Balchik is a modern medical resort complex featuring a balneosanatorium, a mud cure establishment and a medical clinic. This is Touzla of Balchik spa resort. It is recommended for the treatment of after-effects from infantile paralysis, neuritis, slipped discs, radicolitis and infectious polyarthritis. The Tozlata camp site is nearby.

Balchik is one of the oldest and most beautiful coastal towns with a population of 11,861. It was founded in the 6th century B.C. by Greek colonizers. Its first name was Cruni, meaning spring, owing to the numerous springs around. Balchik









The Albena resort

existed in Roman times as a seaport and had its own mint. Later it became the possession of the Boyar Balik and bears his name. After the Balkan War of 1912-1913 it came within the boundaries of Romania and was returned to Bulgaria by the

Craiova Treaty of September 21, 1940.

The most interesting sight in Balchik is the park belonging to the Palace of Queen Maria of Romania. It is now a botanical garden with 3,000 species of plants, among them a unique collection of cactuses. The Palace rises above the shore and the small church was transferred from the island of Crete, stone by stone. Ancient amphorae, Turkish tombstones and fountains can be seen scattered about in the park.

Hotels: Balchik, three stars, with 68 beds; Raketa, two stars, with 36 beds. There is also the Bisser camp site, two stars,

with a restaurant, the Tihiya Kut.

Eight kilometres from Balchik towards Varna is Albena, the newest and most picturesque seaside resort on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The sea here is clean and shallow and the beach is six kilometres long. There are 40 hotels with a total of 12,750 beds, as well as the camp sites Albena, Ekzotika and International, many restaurants and entertainment spots with 10,000 seats, most of these being situated at some distance from the hotels.



Albena

There are good sports facilities: volleyball, basketball and tennis courts, golf links, croquet greens, bowling alleys, horse riding, cycling, a yachting club and go-carts. Next to Kardam Hotel is a men's and women's tailor, shoemaker's, watchmaker's and a dry-cleaning and pressing shop. At the entrance to the resort is the post office, open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

A regular bus service connects it with Varna, Zlatni Pyassatsi, Drouzhba, Tolbukhin and Balchik and a six-seater cutter makes regular trips to Balchik, Kavarna and Kaliakra.

Exhibitions of the works of leading Bulgarian painters, cartoonists and graphic artists are organized in the hotel lobbies. The Miss Albena and the Miss Cherno More beauty contests are held in July and August.

There are several places of entertainment offering in-

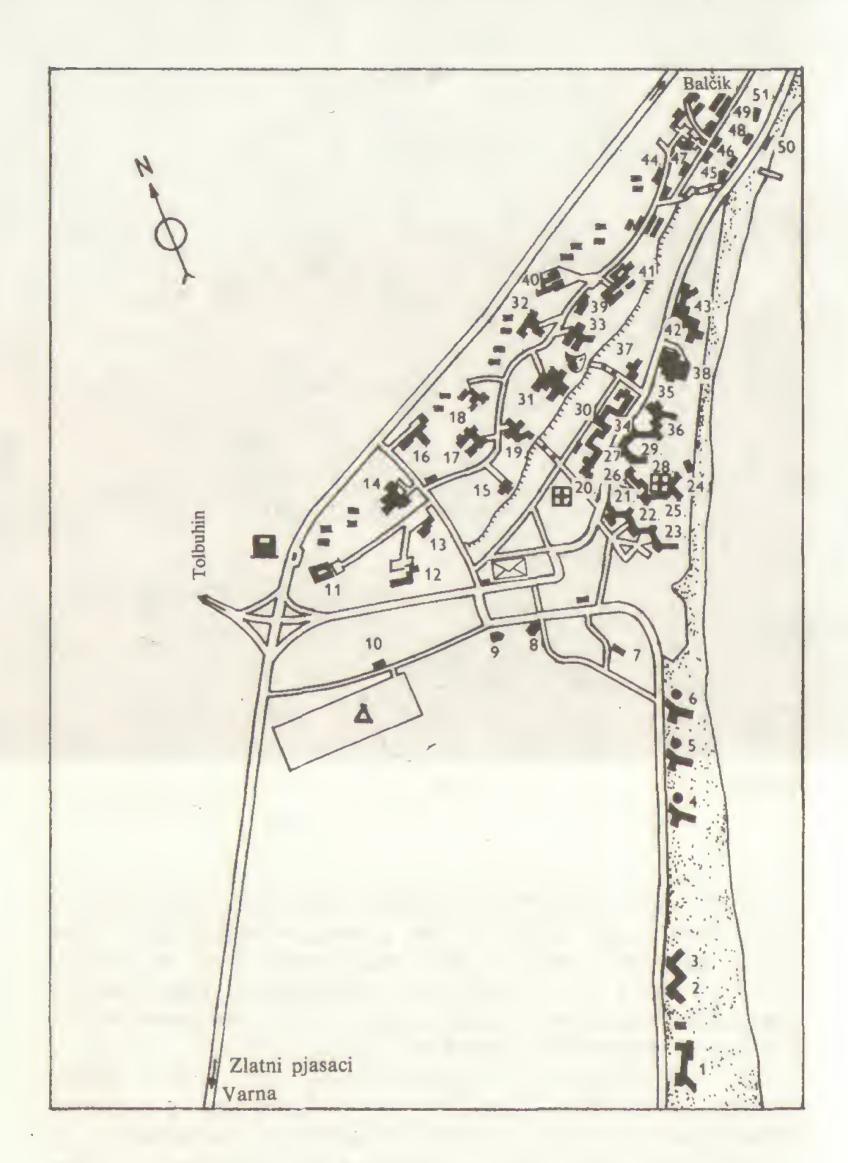
teresting programmes and excellent cuisine.

The Zlaten Klass Taverna, next to the Orlov Hotel is open from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The Dobroudja Taverna in the shopping centre, is open

from 11.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

The Old House Restaurant in national style, with folk orchestra (near the Dobrich restaurant) is open from 6.00 p.m. to 12.00 p.m.



Albena

Hotels: 1. Gergana 2. Slavouna 3. Moura 4. Elitsa 5. Nona 6. Boryana

- 11. Ralitsa 13. Kiev 14. Vihren 16. Kom 17. Leipzig 18. Dnepr
- 19. Neptun 20. Bratislava 21. Karvouna 22. Balik 23. Tervel
- 24. Kaliopa 25. Orlov 27. Slavyanka 29. Drouzhba 30. Praga
- 31. Kompas 32. Shabla 33. Orhidea 34. Warshava 35. Kamelia 36.
- 36. Dorostol 37. Kardam 40. Zvezda 41. Avrora 42. Dobroudja
- 43. Kaliakra 44. Lovech 45. Zdravets 46. Zornitsa

Gorski Tsar Night Club has a nightly concert programme. Open from 9.00 p.m. to 4.00 a.m.

Arabella Night Club, close to the beach, is open from 9.00

p.m. to 4.00 a.m.

Batova Picnic — 18 kilometres from the resort with delicious food and a floor show. Open from 11.00 a.m to 12.00 p.m.

Robinson - a picnic ground near Balchik. Interesting

programme every day from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

In the shopping centre you can buy a wide range of leather, fur and ceramic articles, homespun decorative fabrics, perfumery, shoes, beach wear and souvenirs. The grocery stores, greengrocers', fruiterers' and flower shops are open from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

The medical clinic is next to Bratislava Hotel and there is a

pharmacy at Drouzhba Hotel.

Currency Exchange – at Dorostol Hotel and in the

shopping centre.

About three kilometres from Albena is the village of Obrochishte: with the remains of a Moslem monastery, Ikazalubaba, close by. It consisted of two structures — one was a mausoleum (turbe) to the saint and the other (imaret), an inn for worshippers where board and lodging were free of charge. They were built in the 16th century during the rule of Sultan Suleiman II.

Further along the E-87 highway is *Tolbukhin* (pop. 95, 672), a large administrative and economic centre in Southern Dobroudja. In the 2nd century it was a Thracian and Roman settlement, and in the Middle Ages an important trading centre and rich agricultural area. In 1882 it was named Dobrich after the Bulgarian feudal lord Dobrotitsa. Between 1913 and 1940 Dobrich fell within the boundaries of Romania. In 1949 it was named Tolbukhin after Marshal F.I. Tolbukhin, Commander of the Third Ukrainian Front, whose army entered the town on September 8, 1944.

Today Tolbukhin is a major centre for the food industry. There are also enterprises for the manufacture of high-voltage equipment, gas torches, radiators and agricultural machinery. It is developing as a modern city spacious boulevards, squares, new

public buildings.

Sights: Monument to the Soviet Army in the local park, Monument to the People of Dobroudja.

The Khan Asparouh Memorial Complex, to commemorate

the 18th centenary of the founding of the Bulgarian state.

The District History Museum in the local park has the following sections: Archaeology, National Revival Period, Revolutionary Struggles and Socialist Construction. The Ethnographic exhibition is held at the History Museum, 5 Alen Mak Street.

The Yordan Yovkov Museum House, 18 Maior Vekilski Street.

The Russian Monument about two kilometres outside Tolbukhin on the road to Balchik was built in 1880 by the Russian government in memory of the Russian soldiers killed for the liberation of Tolbukhin from the Turks.

Marshal F.I. Tolbukhin Monument in front of the District

People's Council.

Dimiter Ganev Monument in the centre of Tolbukhin.

Hotels: Dobroudja, three stars; Moskva, two stars.

Balkantourist Bureau, 3 Georgi Dimitrov St.

Tolbukhin-Silistra (92 km)

Silistra (pop. 60,000), is situated 92 kilometres northwest of Tolbukhin on the right bank of the River Danube. It is one of the oldest settlements on the Balkan Peninsula. Under Emperor Trajan (97-177) the Romans built a strong fortress and called it Durostorum. During the Middle Ages it was a strong Bulgarian fortress known by the name of Druster. The Turks surrounded the town with a fortress wall and called it Silvistria. It was one of the four fortresses, together with Rousse, Shoumen and Varna, built to protect the north-east border of the Ottoman Empire. It was an important economic centre. During Russia's war with Turkey, the Russian commanders waged heavy battles near the fortress. After the liberation it was renamed Druster and in 1918 it was incorporated within the boundaries of Romania and was returned to Bulgaria in 1940 under the Craiova Agreement. Today it is a large industrial centre and a higher education centre with a teachers' training college, an agricultural college, economics and mechanical engineering schools. There is a drama theatre, history museum, art gallery and Ethnographic Museum.

Tourist attractions: The 4th century Roman tomb, discovered in 1942, is quadrangular with a cylindrical vault and marvellous frescoes, the finest and best preserved wallpaintings

from the time of Theodosius I.

The figures of people, wild animals, birds, flowers, fruits and the scenes showing leopards fighting with boars are interesting material for studying the way of life in slave society.

The Ethnographic Museum in Medjidie-Tabia fortress, two kilometres from the centre, also has an archaeological exhibition.

About 17 kilometres from Silistra and three kilometres from the Danube is Sreburna Lake, a national reserve under the Institute of Zoology and included in UNESCO's World List. Some very rare species of water birds live here and pelicans from all over Europe converge on the lake in the autumn before their flight south.

South along the E-87 is Zlatni Pyassatsi, one of the biggest resort complexes in Bulgaria. It is 17 kilometres north of Varna,

to which it is connected by a modern motorway. The resort takes its name from the beach — almost 4 kilometres of golden sand over 100 metres wide. It lies on the same latitude as well-known French and Italian resorts on the Mediterranean coast. The climate here is warm and mild, average temperature in July is 22°C and the water temperature from June to September never falls below 20°C and sometimes reaches 27°C.

The complex has 81 modern hotels with 16,270 beds, bungalows and two shady camp sites accommodating about 1,240 with 128 restaurants and places of entertainment, 40 shops, a cultural and information centre, a fleet of 100 buses and microbuses, 84 taxis, a rent-a-car service and good sports facilities. Balkantourist is in the centre of the resort in addition to a barber's and hairdresser's shop. Near Diana Hotel is Vodenitsata (The Mill) Restaurant. The medical clinic has an excellently equipped dental surgery and consulting rooms. When necessary a doctor from the clinic can be called to the hotel by telephone 6-53-52, 6-56-86 and 6-56-87. Medicines can be purchased at the chemist connected to the clinic (tel. 6-56-89), or at the chemist's shop north of the Stariya Dub restaurant.



There are volleyball and tennis courts, mini-golf and croquet pitches in front of the hotels Morsko Oko, Liliya, Rodina, and Tintyava, open daily tel. 6-52-54. Near Hotel Liliya is a children's swimming pool and at Hotel International there is an indoor swimming pool with warm mineral water. The International is the pride of the resort with 370 beds, 2



Tolbukhin

restaurants, coffee shop, and a balneological clinic with diagnostic and therapeutic departments open all the year round. The mineral water of the balneotherapeutical department is clear and colourless; it is slightly mineralized and its temperature ranges between 24°C and 28°C. It can be used in bath tubs and in the indoor swimming pool and is recommended for diseases of the loco-motor system (arthrosis, rheumatism, arthritis)... radicolitis, plexitis, neuritis, mental fatigue, stresses, cardio-vascular diseases (atherosclerosis, hypertonia), bronchitis, the early stages of bronchial asthma and obesity of the 1st and 2nd degree.

In 1979 the International won the World Tourism Organization Grand Prix competing with 150 other hotels all over

the world.

The Post Office is a stone's throw from the International and is open from 7.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. with telephone connections to all countries in the world.

Each hotel has its own parking lot. The car repair service of Balkantourist on the turning to Balchik has good mechanics, spare parts and washing facilities. It is open from 7.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Tel. 6-53-16. There is a filling station open 24 hrs



Tolbukhin. The monument to Khan Asparouh

near the Kosharata restaurant. Near the Casino is a rent-a-car service open from 7.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. Tel. 6-53-63.

Places of entertainment and night clubs offer pleasant and

varied programmes.

Tsiganski Tabor (Gypsy Camp) Night Club serves delicious dishes and excellent wines in Gypsy tents to the music of a

Gypsy orchestra. Open from 9.00 p.m. to 2.00 a.m.

Koukeri (Masked Dancers) Night Club — an original architectural building; 'Koukeri' dances are performed with quaint folk masks. The night club commands a marvellous view of the whole resort. Open from 9.00 p.m. to 4.00 a.m.

Karakachanski Stan. The atmosphere is reminiscent of nomad Karakachan shepherd settlements in the Rhodopes. It is situated in the forest next to the Kolibite. Open from 4.00 p m.

to 2.00 a.m.

Vodenitsata — an original folk restaurant serving grilled chicken, kebabs, home-made sausages and freshly baked bread. Open from 9.00 a.m. to midnight.

Astoria Bar — a modern night club, open May to October. Interesting floor show, music and dancing. Next to Hotel

Astoria. Open from 10.00 p.m to 4.00 a.m.

Caney Night Club — exotic atmosphere, Cuban cocktails, firstclass orchestra. Adjacent to Havana Hotel. Open from 4.00

p.m. to midnight.

Trifon Zarezan Restaurant. An original restaurant with a special room for wine-tasting. Bulgarian cuisine and a well-stocked bar. On the road to Varna. Open from 9.00 a.m. to midnight.

Lovna Sreshta in a wood close to the Aladja Rock Monastery serves local game dishes. Orchestra. Open from 9.00

a.m. to midnight.

Picnic — a taverna in the heart of the forest near Lovna Sreshta. Grills and excellent drinks are served. Nightly programmes of folk songs and dances. Open from 5.00 p.m. to

10.00 p.m.

The Rocky Monastery three kilometres from Zlatni Pyassatsi in one of the most picturesque areas of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is an old monastery carved from the rocks, consisting of an upper and a lower part. The cells are two and a half by two metres. The church is 11.70 metres long, 5 metres wide and 2 metres high. The altar has two alcoves wit mural paintings. The monastery was most probably founded in the 13th-14th century, 300 metres away are the catacombs — cells carved out of the rock and probably used as dwellings by the monks.

The Museum of the Chalcolytic Necropolis (discovered in 1975) is to be found at the entrance of the monastery. It holds

old ornaments, weapons and other artefacts.



Tolbukhin. The Yordan Yovkov Theatre

The Varna Chalcolytic Necropolis, discovered in 1972 on the western outskirts of the city, is an exceptional find which aroused wide international interest. The Necropolis dates from the end of the Chalcolytic period, 3,000 B.C. By the end of 1976, 81 graves had been found, 25 of them symbolic graves with no skeletons. In grave Number One, was a treasure-trove of ornaments, artefacts of solid heaten gold (23.5 carats), 3 bracelets, a rectangular plate, 2 thimbles, 6 rings, 28 round plates, 6 trapezium-shaped and 4 moon-shaped plates, 160 cylindrical beads, with a total weight of 1,091 kg, copper tools, flint knives, a bone knife, 2,095 beads and various ceramic pieces. In graves Number 2,3 and 15 gold artefacts were discovered such as plates, rings and beads. Grave Number 4 contained gold bracelets, plates, rings, beads and other things with a total weight of 1,518 kg, as well as two clay vessels full of gold ornaments. In Grave Number 43 the skeleton was found of a man about 40-50 years of age with various rich ornaments as well as several hundred gold artefacts totalling 1,516 kilograms and other copper and clay vessels and ornaments. This must have been the grave of a nobleman.

The first international resort built on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast has 19 modern hotels with 3,000 beds, many restaurants and tavernas, bungalows with 200 beds and a camp site for 1,500.

The resort is situated 10 km north of Varna. Air temperature in July is 22-23°C and water temperature during the

whole season is from 23 to 27°C.

There are volleyball and tennis courts, table tennis,

scooters, water skis and pedalos.

On the beach not far from the Varna restaurant, is a large pool with mineral water with temperature of 48°C at source. Riviera Hotel, open all year round, also has a pool with warm mineral water.

The medical centre and chemist (tel. 6-10-31) is next to the bus stop in front of the Chernomorets Hotel. In emergencies doctors will make hotel calls.

The resort is connected by a regular bus service to Varna and Zlatni Pyassatsi.

There is a round-the-clock taxi service. Telephones:

6-52-19, 2-22-23, and 6-56-75.

The Post Office is next to the Chernomorets Hotel and is open from 7.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m.

Most shops are north of the bus stop. The hairdresser's is

between Manastirska Izba Restaurant and Hotel Odessos.

Every hotel has a parking lot (cars can be repaired at the service shop near the filling station, or at the Balkantourist's automobile service shop at Zlatni Pyassatsi (tel 6-43-16). The filling station is open round the clock.

Places of interest:

Manastirska Izba Restaurant, open from 7.00 a.m. to midnight. Bar open until 4.00 a.m. Tel 6-11-77.

Sedemte Odai Restaurant, next to the Manastirska Izba.

Open from 5.00 p.m. to midnight.

Chernomorets Taverna with an interesting programme by Bulgarian and foreign musicians. Open from 10.00 p.m. to 4.00 a.m. Tel 6-13-13.

In July and August there are concerts by folk ensembles

from all over the country.

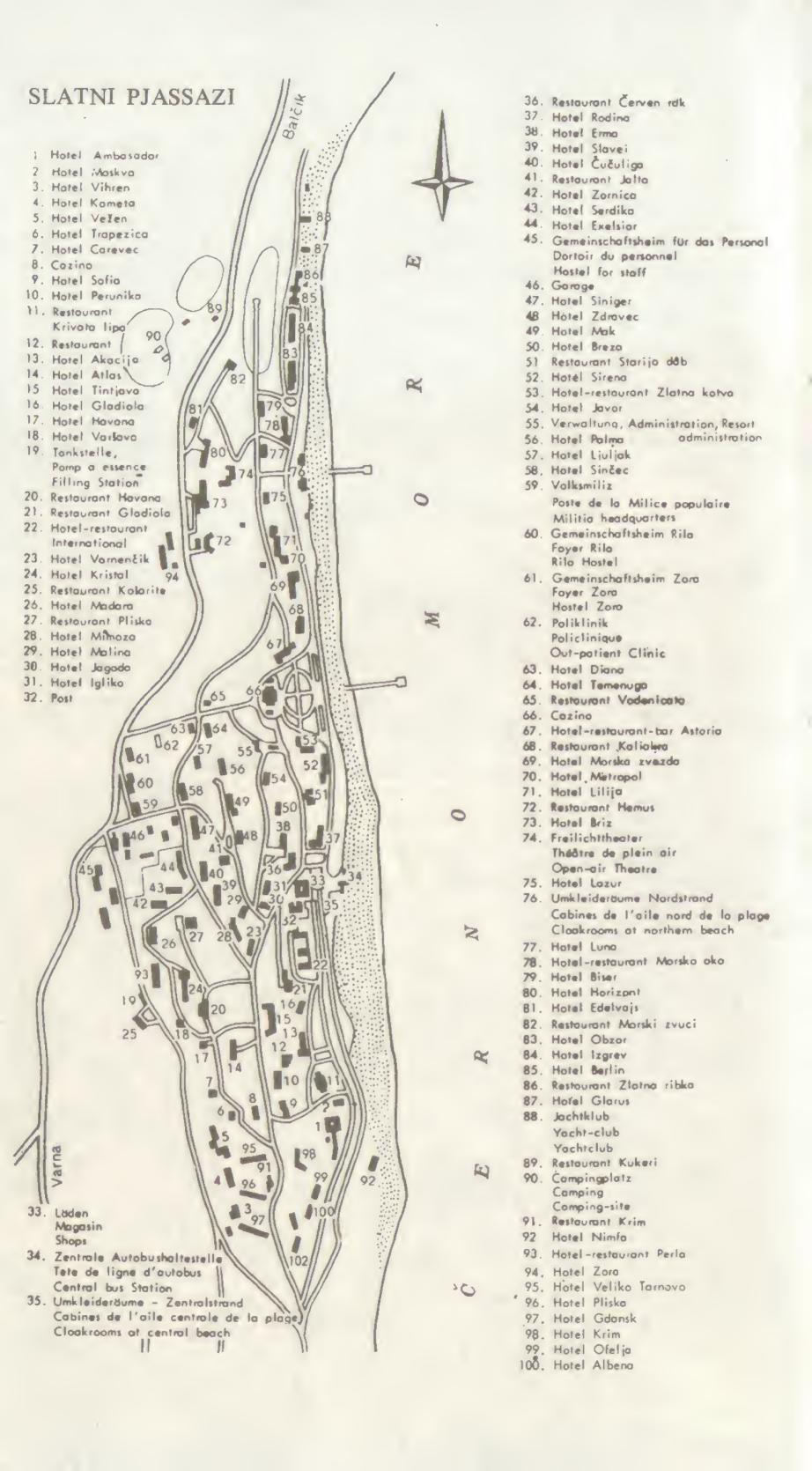
Souvenirs and other craft articles are sold in the little shops next ot the Chernomorets Restaurant and not far from the Manastirska Izba.

Detailed information can be obtained at the Tourist Service Bureau in Chernomorets Restaurant (tel. 6-13-01) and Roubin Hotel (tel. 6-10-20).

Five-star Varna Hotel, with 304 double rooms and 37 suites, radio and television and balcony in each room, looking

The Zlatni Pyassatsi resort







Zlatni Pyassatsi. Shipka Hotel



out either on the sea or on the park. Five lifts, restaurant, taverna — "Melnik" — cake shop, four bars with seats, night

club, and several conference rooms.

The mineral water has a temperature of 42°C at source. It is slightly mineralized and is available in tubs at the hotel's outdoor swimming pool. The balneotherapeutic clinic is equipped with modern electrical and medical apparatus. Treatments: curative tub dipping, massage, inhalation with sea water electrolux, sauna, scolarium, mud treatment and remedial exercises. The water is recommended for inflammatory and degenerative diseases of the locomotory system, chronic neuralgia, radicolitis, plexit, hypertension, atherosclerosis and mental fatigue. A slimming programme is also available.

The Joliot-Curie International House of Scientists, with 250 beds, is not far from the Varna Hotel. It has three conference rooms with facilities for simultaneous translation into four languages. Mineral water treatment can be taken here

under medical supervision.

Balkantourist Bureau is at the Roubin Hotel, tel. 6-10-20. Varna (pop. 291, 224), Bulgaria's third largest city is situated on the Black Sea coast at the head of Varna Bay between the Frangensko tableland to the north and the slopes of the Avren tableland to the south. It has a moderate continental climate with a mild humid winter and a warm dry summer. The mean annual temperature is 12°C.

The site of present-day Varna was inhabited in the Stone Age, traces of settlements have been found in the village of

Beloslav and in the Pobiti Kamuni (Stone Forest) area.

According to ancient chroniclers, Varna was founded in the 4th century B.C. by Greek colonists and was then known as Odessos. In the 3rd-2nd century B.C. it was a flourishing town minting its own coins which bore the image of the Thracian god Darsala. In 72 B.C. it was conquered by the Romans but retained is autonomy until the establishment of the Roman province of Lower Moesia in the early years of the Christian era. After the division of the Roman Empire, the town came within the boundaries of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium). It was surrounded by a new fortress wall and within that wall were temples, theatres, baths and stadiums. Later on, during the Christian era many churches were built, traces of which can still be seen (the basilica in Tsar Kroum St. and the Djanavar Tepe and Tourna Tepe churches). At the end of the 6th century the Slavs settled here, giving it the name of Varna, and in 681 it was captured by the proto-Bulgarians led by Khan Asparouh. It became a Bulgarian town in 1201 during the reign of Tsar Kaloyan.

In 1389 Varna fell under Ottoman rule. The town gained prominence in 1444 through the crusade led by Wladislaw III



Zlatni Pyassatsi. Koukeri night club

(Warnenczik). The crusaders reached Varna but were defeated in a major battle nearby and Wladislaw III was killed. There is now a mausoleum to Wladislaw Warnenczik on the site where the battle was fought.

The Ottoman rulers turned Varna into an important military and strategic point. They extended its fortifications, making it part of the fortified quadrangle Rousse-Shoumen-Varna-Silistra. In 1828 a strong Russian fleet attacked the town,

captured it and remained there for two years.

On July 27 .1878 the town was liberated by Russian troops. Economy and culture developed rapidly. Small industrial enterprises were set up and the working-class movement began. Late in the 19th century the first socialist group was set up. Lenin's newspaper *Iskra* (Spark) travelled from Switzerland to Russia, passing through Varna.

During the struggles against fascism (1941-1945) the first sabotage group was set up. Many partisans from Varna fell in

battle.

Today Varna is a rapidly developing city with large shipyards, a dry dock, etc.



The Rock Monastery

The Asparouh Bridge is 2 kilometres long and 16 metres wide and rises about 60 metres above Varna Bay. Tankers with 2,000 tons displacement are able to sail beneath.

The Varna-Ilyichovsk ferry service links the Soviet Union port with Varna. The line is serviced by two Bulgarian and two

Soviet ships.

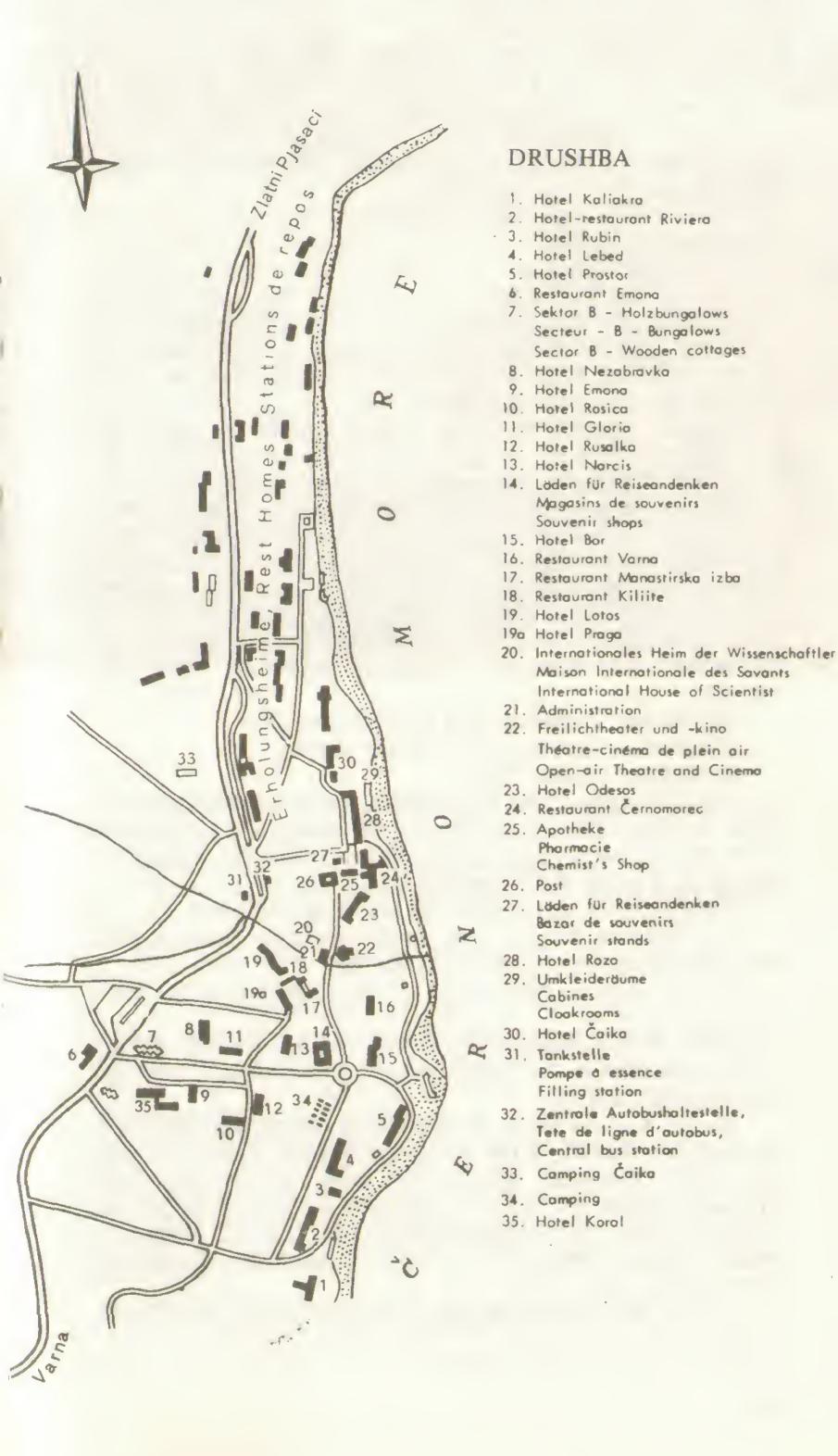
The Palace of Culture and Sport has a Congress Hall, a revolving stage, which can be converted into a rostrum, simultaneous translation facilities, a large conference hall, 7 small halls and an exhibition hall.

There are covered football and tennis facilities, a spacious

press centre and snackbar.

Hotel Cherno More, three stars, has 414 beds and four suites, panoramic restaurant on the 22nd floor, winter garden, two conference rooms, bar, taverna and covered parking lot. Tel. 3-40-88.

The dolphin aquarium is an interesting sight. The glass hall of the main pool is 12 metres long and 12 metres wide and it is linked to a small pool with water tunnels where the dolphins rest. The water for the pools is taken from the deepest parts of the Black Sea 80 metres from the shore.



Varna hosts the annual Varna Summer International Festival of Red Cross Films, opera performances, concerts, etc. There is also a symphony orchestra.

Varna is the second largest University Centre in the country and also has a Naval School, opened in 1881 when the Russian

fleet was transferred to Varna.

Notable monuments are: Museum of History and Art in the former girls' high school built in the last century. The museum was opened to mark the 13th centenary of the Bulgarian State, founded in 681. The museum has 40 exhibition halls, three of which show artefacts from the famous Varna Necropolis. Also on display are other ancient finds, and artefacts from the Middle Ages and the National Revival period. There is an art

gallery exhibiting modern Bulgarian art.

District History Museum, 7 Osmi Noemvri Street, tel. 2-24-23: Archaeological Museum, 5 Sheinovo Street, tel. 2-30-62; Ethnographic Museum, 22 Panagyurishte Street, tel. 2-00-80; Museum of the Working-Class Revolutionary Movement, 3 Osmi Noemvri Street; Museum-Park Wladyslaw Warnenczik; Navy Museum, 2 Chervenoarmeiski Blvd. tel. 2-24-06; The Art Gallery, 65 Lenin Blvd. tel. 2-42-81; Georgi Velchev Museum, 8 Zhechka Karamfilova Street, tel. 2-56-39; Natural Science Museum in the Maritime Gardens, tel. 2-82-94; Aquarium and Museum, 4 Chervenoarmeiska Street, tel. 2-41-93.

The Roman Thermae, built in the 2nd century.

The Roman Bath from the 3rd-4th century.

St Nicholas Church 1866.

The Cathedral of the Holy Virgin, erected in the centre of Varna in 1886. The iconostasis and the bishop's throne are the work of master-woodcarvers from Debur, while the icons were painted by a group of Russian painters.

The Pantheon Memorial in the Maritime Gardens.

The National Revival Alley in the Maritime Gardens, with busts of outstanding figures of that period.

Dimiter Blagoev Monument in the boulevard of the same

name.

Karel Skorpil Monument, founder of Bulgarian archaeology. The Monument to Bulgarian-Soviet Friendship, near the

Yuri Gagarin stadium.

Hotels: Cherno More, three stars, 35 Georgi Dimitrov Blvd. tel. 3-40-88; Odessa, 1 Georgi Dimitrov Blvd, three stars, with 170 beds, restaurant, bar, coffee shop, information desk, rent-a-car service. Tel. 2-53-12; Moussala, 3 Moussala Street, tel. 2-26-02; Orbita, 25 V.Kolarov Street, tel. 2-51-62; Preslav, 1 Avram Gachev Street, tel. 2-25-83; Repoublika, September Ninth Square, tel. 2-83-53.

Tourist Information Bureau, 6 Koloni Street, tel. 2-28-03.



The Drouzhba resort

Balkantourist Bureau, 3 Moussala Street, tel. 2-55-24 and 2-08-07.

Balkan Airlines Office, 2 Shipka Street, tel. 2-29-48.

The Union of Bulgarian Motorists, 9 Dr Zamenhov Street, tel. 2-62-93.

The Rila International Bureau, 3 Shipka Street, tel 2-62-73.

In the Dianavaraster section are the foundations of a basilica from the 6th century with some marble columns, capitals and cornices and a receptacle containing mortal remains, decorated with precious stones, standing between two

reliquaries of silver and marble.

South along the E-87 highway is the mouth of the River Kamchiya which flows through the Longoza reserve. A monument erected where the river flows into the sea commemorates a group of political immigrants who came to Bulgaria by submarine in 1941 to take part in the struggle against fascism.

The Kamchiya tourist complex combines all the qualities of a seaside resort with the beautiful scenery of the Longoza reserve. The Kamchiya and Longoza hotels offer 500 beds,

while the Rai campsite, the largest camping ground in Bulgaria, has accommodation for 6,000, and the Pirin and Kamchiya camp sites have accommodation for 1,000 each. There are two restaurants, bar, food pavilions and souvenir shops. There are five other restaurants – Kamchiya, Kamchiiska Liliya, Kamchiiska Sreshta, Piknik and Nestinari which serve fish dishes.

Four kilometres from the turning to the Kamchiya resort complex is the village of Staro Oryahovo and the nearby resort, Skorpilovtsi with two camp sites, three restaurants, various pavilions and shops. The beach is of dunes and the sea is clean and shallow. The Horizont and Izgrev camp sites have accommodation for about 3,500, bungalows for 200 and two restaurants.

26 kilometres along the highway is Obzor (pop. 1,800) with a wonderful combination of seaside and mountain resort. It has three restaurants and two camp sites, Prostor and Sluntse, in its surroundings.

About 35 kilometres further along the E-87 is Slunchev Bryag, the largest Bulgarian seaside resort. It has 106 hotels, with a total of 25,500 beds, 41 large restaurants, three places of entertainment and three camp sites accommodating 3,200.

Slunchev Bryag is an exotic resort and is a favourable with foreign tourists. Here the sand is finer, with small dunes on the beach, the water is shallow, the sandy seabed slopes gently and

Drouzhba, Varna Grand Hotel

A view from the city of Varna







The Chalcolithic gold treasure from the Varna necropolis /5,000 years B.C./

the sun is perfect. It is only four kilometres from the fairy-tale

peninsula town of Nessebur.

The buildings successfully combine the traditions of old Bulgaria with modern conceptions. Glass facades admit the maximum amount of sunshine, while vaulted and yoke-shaped eaves, walls and verandahs covered with vines and quiet inner courtyards provide an ideal environment, attractive to thousands of holidaymakers from all over the world.

The beach here is six kilometres long and more than 150 metres wide in places. The temperature in July averages 22°C rarely reaching more than 30°C. Gentle sea breezes keep the air

fresh and the nights are cool.

The medical clinic is some 200 metres from Diamant Hotel, left of the main road leading to Varna. There are also two pharmacies, one next to the clinic and the other near the post

office, both open from 8.00 a.m. to 8.0 p.m.

Slunchev Bryag is a children's paradise. Day care centres are organized under the supervision of qualified teachers, trained nurses and doctors. For a minimum fee, children can be looked after in kindergartens near Hotels Persenk, Balkan, Gramada, Trakia. Continental, Zornitsa and Mercury.

Near the Hotels Sokol and Iskur tennis courts are open from 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. The mini-golf course next to Hotels Sever, Iskur and Balaton is also open from 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.



A small electric train links Fregata Bar at the southern end with the night club Vyatarna Melnitsa (Windmill) at the northern. There is a bus service between Fregata Bar and the Hanska Shatra Tavern. Bicycles may be hired at the information bureau near Ropotamo Hotel.

Hairdresser's salons are at the Phoenix Bazaar and near Hotel Trakia, Continental, Bourgas, Kouban and Rila, open

from 6.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.

There is a round-the-clock taxi stand by the Palma Hotel Tel 291.

A car repair garage is at the back of Hotel Park (tel. 292). The filling station, open day and night, stands where the road turns to Nessebur. The Rent-a-Car service is next to the Palma Restaurant. Tel. 291.



Varna. The Palace of Sport and Culture

The Wladyslaw III Varnenchik park-museum of militant friendship





Varna. Cherno More Hotel

Slunchev Bryag has many places of entertainment offering

fine cuisine and interesting floor shows.

Variety Bar, the biggest and best night club in the resort, is between Hotels Olymp and Phoenix. It is open from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Fregata Bar is a ship 'stranded' on the dunes in the southern part of the resort. Open from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

Roussalka Bar a night club with an excellent orchestra and floor show with Bulgarian and foreign artists. It is in the centre of the resort next to the Casino Restaurant, open from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

Hanska Shatra — an original taverna built to resemble the tents of the old Bulgarian khans. During the day it functions as a restaurant, and at night offers an interesting floor show. Open

from 11.00 a.m. to 2.00 a.m.

Chouchoura folk taverna — furnished in national Bulgarian style, serves local specialities and drinks, folk orchestra. Open

until midnigth.

Vyatarna Melnitsa (The Windmill) — a folk taverna serving original Bulgarian dishes, cooked miller's style. At night there is a fantastic view of the resort. Open from 11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. and from 6.00 p.m. to midnight.



Varna. The Stoyan Buchvarov Drama Theatre

Ribarska Hizha - right on the beach near Hotel Vitosha,

specializing in sea food. Music. Open until 1.00 a.m.

Kapitanska Sreshta — an old restored house in Nessebur, serves delicious food in a pleasant atmosphere. Open until 1.00 a m.

Lozarska Kushta — an original restaurant in an old house in Nessebur. Open until 11.00 p.m.

The Buchva and Robinson night clubs.

The International Golden Orpheus Pop Festival is held at Slunchev Bryag annually in June. A Decade of Symphony Music is an annual feature at Bourgas, Slunchev Bryag and Primorsko Youth Centre. In July an International Folklore Festival is organized in Bourgas and Slunchev Bryag.

Trips are organized from Slunchev Bryag to nearby places of interest and to the interior. Excursions are also arranged to

Mamaya in Romania, Istanbul, Moscow and Kiev.

Two swimming pools, indor and outdor, filled with heated sea water are linked to Hotel Bourgas by a covered passage. The hotel offers physiotherapy treatment, massage, sauna and remedial exercises.



Varna. The Roman Thermae

Nessebur (pop. 7,000), provides a striking contrast to Slunchev Bryag. It is a wonder-town, a fantasy come true, consisting of a rocky peninsula, some 900 yards long and 300 yards wide, jutting out into the sea, with lonely houses perched on it. A very narrow isthmus connects this island with the mainland. At night when it is all lit up, it resembles a floating

ship, something out of this world.

Nessebur is now a museum town with fine old churches, the oldest of which were built in the 5th and 6th centuries. Among them are the Old Metropolitan Church in the centre of the town. Its foundations and walls are still preserved; the Basilica near the shore is also worth seeing; the Church of St John the Baptist, built in the 10th century is entirely preserved. Its frescoes are from the 16th and 17th centuries, an archaeological museum is now housed in it. The Church of St Stephan, 10th century, also known as the New Metropolitan Church has well preserved murals from 16th -17th century. The bishop's throne and pulpit are decorated with woodcarvings.



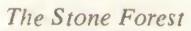
Varna. A Monument to Georgi Dimitrov in front of the Party House

Varna. The Alley of Revival in the Marine Garden





Varna, The Monument to Bulgarian-Soviet Friendship







Kamchiya

Most churches are in the 'pictorial style' and were built in the 13th-14th centuries such as the Church of St Theodore, of which only the northern and western facades are preserved; the Church of St Paraskeva; the Church of Christ Pantokrator, in the centre of the town, comparatively well preserved; the Church of St John Aliturgetos, above the seaport.

In the town there is a permanent ethnographic exhibition of national costumes from the Bourgas area. It is held in the Mouskoyani House, built 1840 which is also the Head Office of

the Nessebur Museums. Tel. 34-94.

Hotel Messembria, two stars, 24 beds and one suite,

restaurant, bar, Rent-a-Car service. Tel. 32-55.

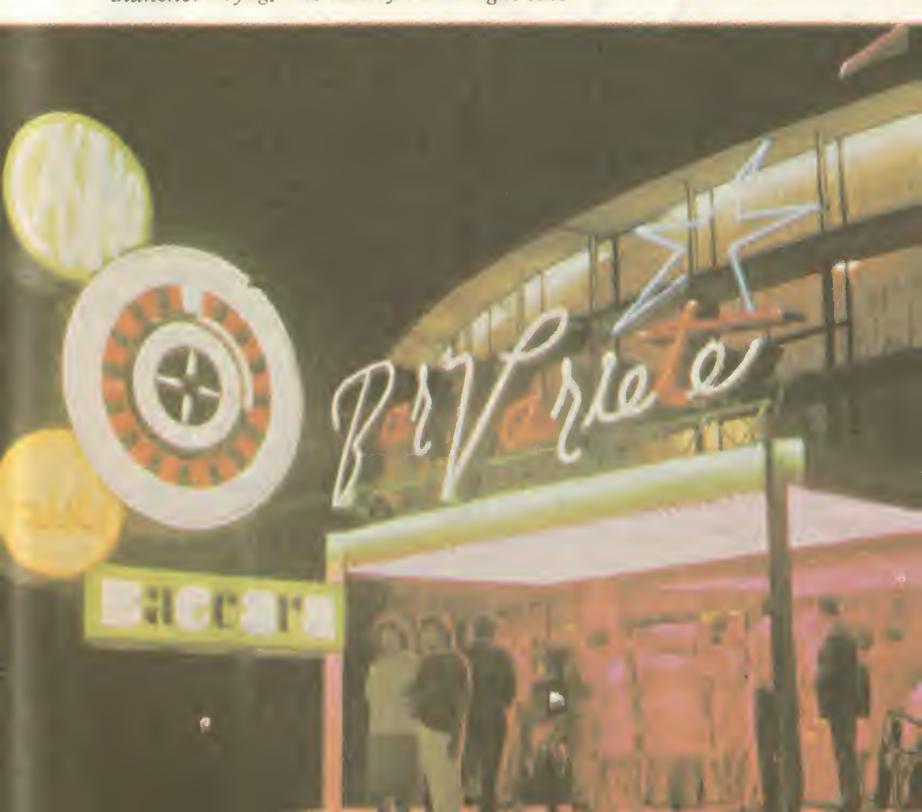
About two kilometres west of Nessebur is the village of Aheloi, chiefly known for the decisive battle which took place here on August 20, 917 between the Bulgarian troops of Tsar Simeon and the Byzantine troops led by Leo Foka in which the Byzantine troops suffered a defeat.

Some nine kilometres south of Aheloi is the town of Pomorie (pop. 12,000), situated on a narrow rocky peninsula. It was founded early in the 4th century B.C. under the name of



Slunchev Bryag. The Buchvata |Butt| tavern

Slunchev Bryag. The variety show night club





Anhialo by emigrants from Apollonia (present-day Sozopol). All the wooden buildings were destroyed by fire in 1906. A small corner in National Revival style architecture has been preserved in the eastern part of the town next to the breakwater. Of particular interest is the burial mound near Pomorie. It is an early combination of the Thracian custom of beehive tombs and tumuli in the style of the Roman mausoleums. The tomb is fully restored and open to visitors. To the wsst of present-day Pomorie are the remains of an ancient settlement destroyed by the Avars in the 6th century. The sights include the Christ Church (1784) with valuable icons; the Monastery of St George (1856), whose wooden buildings are built round a quadrangle; Yavorov's Rocks from where the Bulgarian poet, Peyu K. Yavorov, used to watch the sea.

Balkantourist hotels: Pomorie, two stars, overhangs the sea. It has 214 beds, two suites, restaurant, banqueting hall and night club. Not far from the town is the Evropa camp site, two

stars. Pomorie is well-known for its curative mud.

Balkantourist Bureau 49, N. Luskov Street.

About ten kilometres east of Pomorie is *Bourgas* (pop. 168,412), the second largest city on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, and the fifth largest in the country, situated in Bourgas

Bay.

In the late 18th and early 19th century its population subsisted mainly on fishing and grain crops. The town developed rapidly after the completion of the Plovdiv-Bourgas railway line in 1890 and the construction of the harbour in 1903.

Today Bourgas is one of the country'a major industrial centres and is the home port of the Bulgarian oceanic fishing fleet. Bourgas is the centre of a rich farming region which specializes in the production of grain crops and stockbreeding.

The city is modern, with wide boulevards and a beautifully laid out centre. There is a theatre, opera company, symphony orchestra, puppet theatre, open-air theatre, library, art gallery

and various higher educational institutes.

Bourgas has developed intensively as a centre of international tourism with the old sea settlements of Nessebur and Sozopol and the resort of Slunchev Bryag situated in close

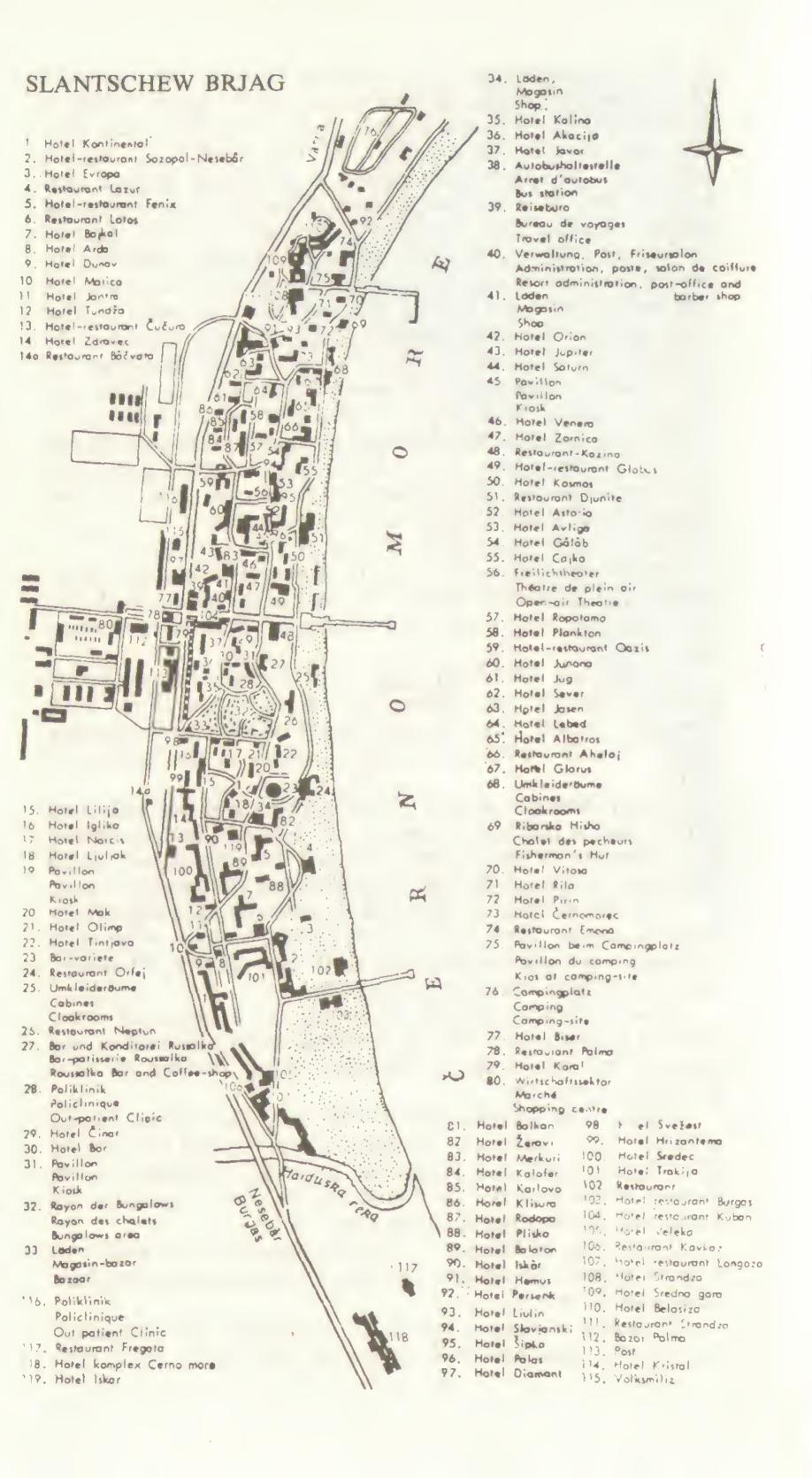
proximity to the city.

Sights: The District History Museum, the railway station with its clock tower, the synagogue (now housing the city art gallery), the Cyril and Methodius Church, Monument to the Russian soldiers who died for Bulgaria's liberation from the Turks and the Monument to the Soviet Army.

The village of Banevo – 16 kilometres west of the city; the curative mineral springs and the modern balneosanatorium draw

thousands of visitors.

Bolshevik Island (former St Anastasia); the monastery church has been preserved. After the September 1923 anti-





Slunchev Bryag. Cuban Hotel

fascist uprising 43 communists were imprisoned here. They succeeded in escaping to the Soviet Union through Turkey.

Hotels: Bulgaria, three stars, 21 Purvi Mai Street, with 33 single rooms, 171 double rooms and five suites. It has a restaurant, "Bulgaria", as well as a panoramic restaurant, coffee shop, bars, night club, discotheque, conference room with facilities for simultaneous translation into four languages and a currency exchange bureau. Tel 4-28-20; Briz, three stars, near the railway station, with 230 beds, restaurant. Tel. 4-31-90; Primorets, two stars, near the beach. Tel. 4-41-17; Czechoslovakia, three stars, tel. 4-21-42.

Seven kilometres south of Bourgas is the Kraimorie camp site, three stars, with accommodation for 1,200. There are bungalows with 40 beds, restaurant which serves roast chicken

and sheep's yoghurt.

Balkantourist Bureau 2, Purvi Mai Street, tel. 4-68-25; Tourist Service Bureau 2, Purvi Mai Street, tel. 4-55-53.

The Union of Bulgarian Motorists, 11 D. Iliev Street, tel. 2-62-93

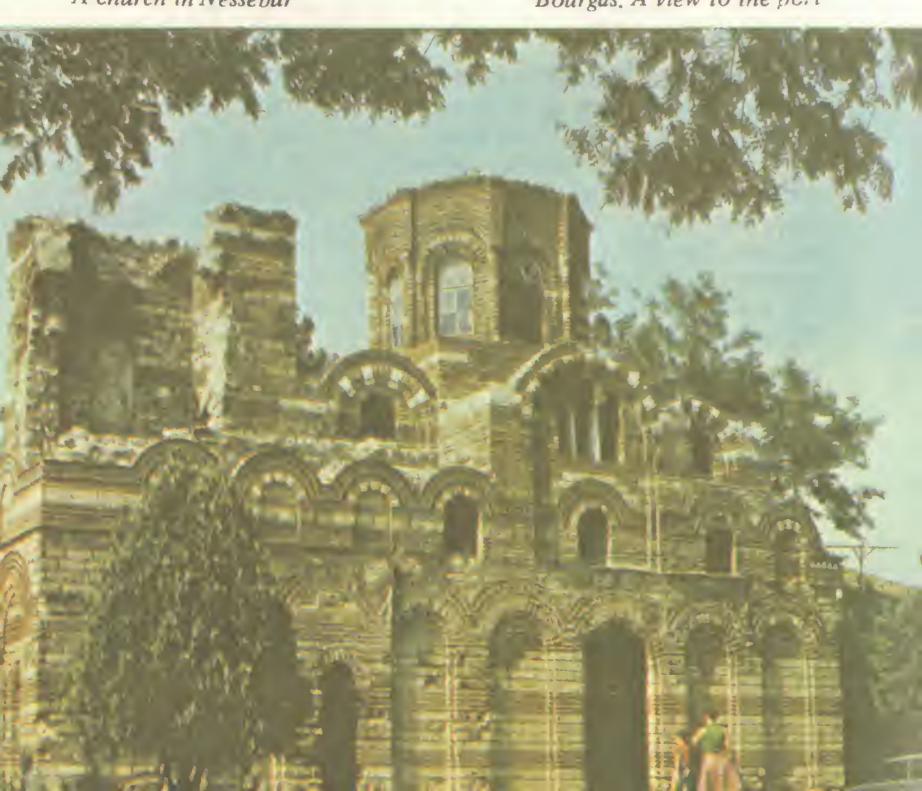
Continue 10 km along the E-87 highway to the village of Chernomorets. Hidden coves with fine sand attract a very large



Nessebur

A church in Nessebur

Bourgas. A view to the port





number of tourists who prefer peace and quiet. Chernomorets camp site, two stars, with accommodation for 1,500, offers good tourist facilities. Four kilometres further on and six kilometres south of Sozopol is Gradina camp site, two stars, with accommodation for 1,500, plus 20 beds in bungalows, showers, medical centre, fruit stores and snack bar.

Sozopol (pop. 3,800) is one of the most picturesque coastal settlements in Bulgaria. One of the oldest towns on the Black Sea coast, Sozopol was founded in the 7th century by Greek



colonists from the town of Miletus in Asia Minor. It was called Apollonia in honour of the god of the sun. The town quickly developed into a brisk trading centre maintaining commercial links with the town of Miletus and later on with Athens. Apollonia developed further late in the 5th century when the Thracian tribes united to form the kingdom of Odris. Under the Thracians the town expanded its trading activities still



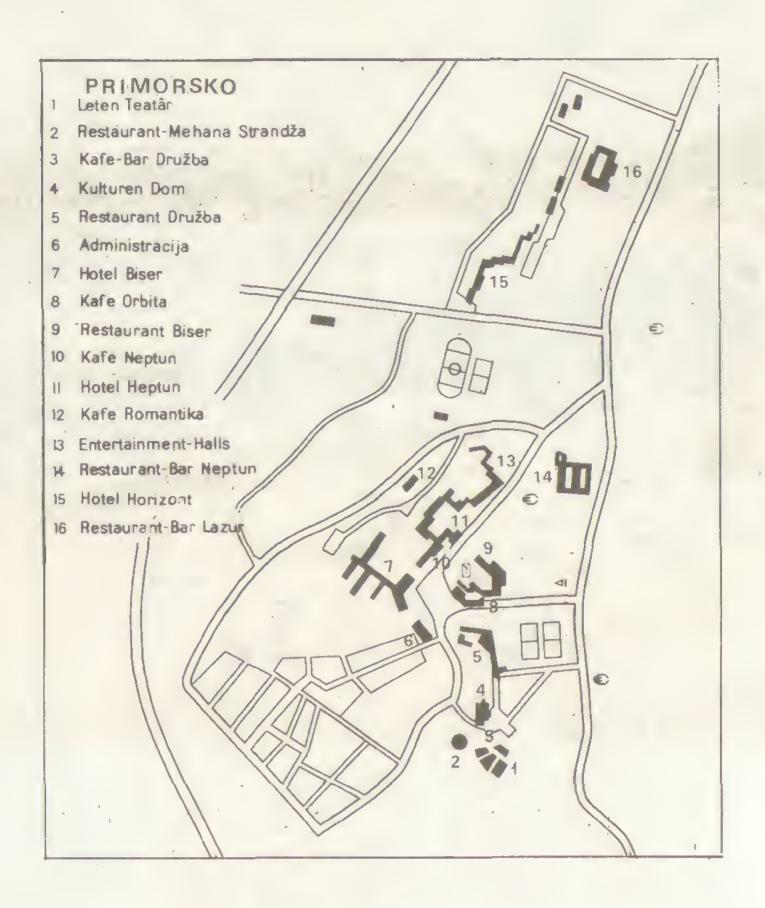
Sozopol

further. Not far from it stood the famous statute of Apollo, the work of the Greek sculptor Calamis. In the year 72 A.D. the Roman general Marcus Lucullus crushed the resistance of the Thracian tribes, captured the town and carried off the famous statue of Apollo as a trophy.

The narrow cobled streets of the town, the bay-windows of the houses, their broad overhanging eaves and panelled walls lend it a special charm very appealing to tourists. It is famed as a town of artists and fishermen.

Part of Bourgas District History Museum is housed in one of the local churches.

The old *Church of the St Holy Virgin* was built in various stages, the last of which was completed during the National Revival period. The iconostasis, the pulpit and the bishop's throne made by master woodcarvers are of particular interest. The wooden houses built in the 18th and 19th centuries are specially appealing, most of them have been restored. Among them the House of Marieta Stefanova which stands opposite the medieval fortress wall is worth a visit together with the House of Kreanoolu and the Thracian Inn on the shore. The old part of Sozopol has been declared an architectural and historical reserve.



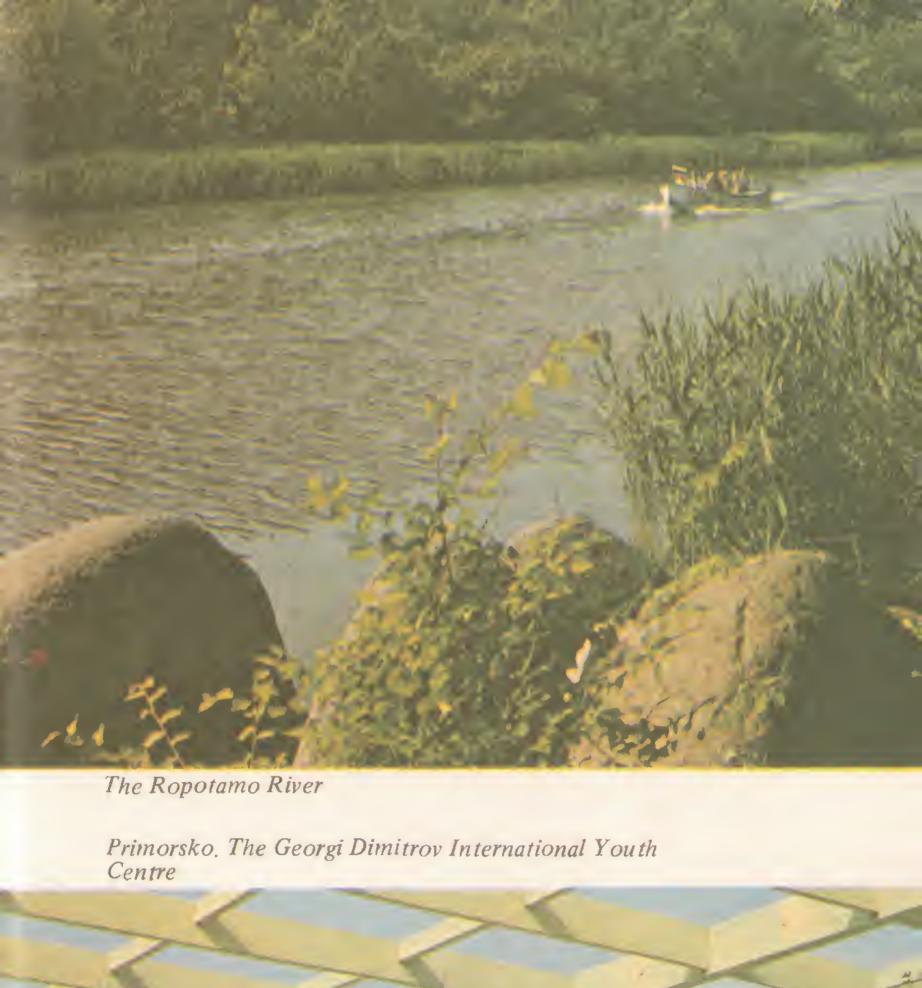
Hotel Sozopol, three stars;

Zlatna Ribka, two stars, situated three kilometres from the town with accommodation for 1,000, with ten beds in bungalows; Harmanite camp site, two stars, south of Sozopol, 1000 places and 20 beds in bungalows.

Balkantourist Bureau – in the centre of the town, tel. 19.

Five kilometres south of Sozopol is the Kavatsite tourist complex with a motel of the same name, three stars, restaurant and night club; a camp site, also of the same name, as well as the camp sites of Smokinya, two stars, and Vesselie, one star.

After crossing the Ropotamo River the E-87 highway reaches the village of *Primorsko*, situated at the mouth of the Dyavolska River. Nearby is the Dyavolsko Hanche Restaurant. To the north of the village is the Romantika camp site (three stars), and three kilometres from the village is the Georgi





Dimitrov International Youth Centre — a resort complex catering for 3,000 tourists with restaurants, hotels, bungalows, night clubs and places of folk entertainment. Holidays are organized by the Orbita Youth Bureau of Tourism. Four kilometres south of Primorsko is the little town of *Kiten* with its cosy beaches Close by are five camp sites: Koop, one star, Yug, two stars, Atliman. Less and Koral.

Next comes the resort of *Michourin* (pop. 4,800), with its three beaches and very calm shallow sea. Two camp sites, Arapya, one star, and Nestinarka, one star, are at the service of

tourists.

From the town of Michourin the E-87 highway continues southwest to *Malko Turnovo*. This was one of the centres of the 1903 Preobrazhenie Uprising against Ottoman domination. Many of its old houses are now architectural monuments. Ten kilometres away is a border check-point with Turkey. There is a motel with 100 beds, a restaurant, a tourist information bureau and a currency exchange office.

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